



WARRAH

• **LIVING LEARNING GROWING**

**Spring
News
2020**

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ABOUT WARRAH SOCIETY

Based in Sydney's North West, Warrah Society is an experienced NDIS provider of supports for adults and children with disability in a diverse range of settings and services. Guided by the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, we strive to know each unique individual, and to support them in the choices they have made for their life's journey. Warrah:

- Is registered by the NSW Department of Education as a Special School from K-12
- Is a registered provider of a broad range of supports under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- Delivers Supported Independent Living, a range of Community Support Services, Community Courses & Workshops, Short Stay Accommodation, and In-Home Support
- Is approved to provide Support Coordination
- Is an approved Housing Provider for Specialist Disability Accommodation
- Holds Certification since 1994 for Warrah's Biodynamic Farm
- Is a registered charity.

Upcoming Events

R U Ok Day?

Thursday 10 September

World Cerebral Palsy Day

Wednesday 6 October

International Day of People with Disability

Thursday 3 December



'Golden Flowers'

Painted by Donna Hanlon

Spring Holidays

School - Last day Term 3: Thursday 24 September
First day of Term 4: Wednesday 14 October

Farm Shop - Closed Monday 5 October
(Labour Day Public Holiday)

Office - Closed Monday 5 October
(Labour Day Public Holiday)

Community Support Services - Closed
Monday 5 October (Labour Day Public Holiday)

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From the Board

Although generally, the seasons seem to tick over quicker and quicker it feels like the pace of 2020 has been more of an exception to that rule – probably due to the amount of time spent in ‘hibernation’. It’s a relief to finally have Spring around the corner – despite the significant challenges presented by the ongoing COVID19 situation.

Like last quarter, Warrah remains in a secure and robust position to tackle these challenges and the Board are very proud of the efforts of our whole community under challenging circumstances. That said, perhaps our most significant risk right now is complacency, and we encourage everyone to remain vigilant. A continued focus on health and safety remains imperative. Of course, this especially applies to the more vulnerable members of society.

Your Board continues to meet regularly and frequently consult with the management team – albeit mostly via Zoom these days! While our crisis response has been a significant focus, we have also tried to ensure it has not been our *only* focus. Ticking over into the new financial year makes for a busy time; reviewing the year past and setting the new budget and agenda for the year ahead.

We want to take this opportunity to thank all those that took part in our recent stakeholder survey. While the results are still being collated, we were pleased that overall the feedback the organisation received was very positive. Naturally, there is always room for improvement, and as we go through the details, I’m sure that we will be able to action some of the suggestions and recommendations we have received.

2020/2021 will see the Board continue to focus on our ‘people agenda’ recognising that one of the best ways to maintain high-quality services for our clients and residents is to ensure we continue to invest in those that we entrust with their care – our employees. Just as it was last year, investment in training continues to be an essential part of this initiative. Though the necessity to ‘physically distance’ wherever possible has meant that we were not able to achieve all the training goals we set for ourselves last year, we have carried this initiative forward, and staff training is a significant line item in the budget for the year ahead.

We are delighted to welcome Anna Hay into the organisation in the role of People and Culture Manager. We believe this is a valuable investment. Anna will be working closely with the management team to help identify and manage the professional development needs of our staff, and we wish her every success in her new position.

Another focus (though also challenged by current circumstances) is our desire to move forward with our ‘Outdoor Learning’ initiative. In keeping with the vision of Warrah as a centre for life-long learning, we continue to explore ways to optimise the use of our unique property, farm and surroundings. Our school students have already started to enjoy a new curriculum rich in outdoor activity, and we will selectively look to bolster our adult services and programs to mirror this approach. In particular, by broadening and building upon our craft programs, we hope to facilitate for our clients to engage and develop new skills and enjoy the rewards of the therapeutic and practical benefits that ensue.

We were delighted to receive our new school certificate of registration for the period of January 2021 until December 2025. Pleasingly the appointed school inspector made a recommendation to the Minister for Education that our registration be approved without a formal in school inspection. Congratulations to Jan and the team for all their hard work on all the documentation!

We are thrilled to report that development has started on the site of the Walumeda building. We hope that by around Christmas time we will have completed the new fully accessible facility that will (by day) form the new base for the Discovery program and include two new craft rooms. By night it will be used to provide a much-needed respite option for families and will consist of four bedrooms as well as a fully accessible kitchen and bathroom.

None of this would be possible without the immense contribution from the property development team at Holdmark and the incredible generosity of their CEO, Sarkis Nassif and the Nassif family. Through The John Paul (Nassif) Foundation, they will be underwriting the bulk of the project with a donation to Warrah of around \$600,000! This is one of the most significant contributions we have ever received - what an incredible Christmas present!

We look forward to having the opportunity to invite the whole Warrah community to join with us to thank Sarkis and the Nassif family in person – fingers crossed!

Steve Malin
Chairperson, Warrah Board

From the Executive

We welcome Spring, which brings new growth and development which has been quietly forming at Warrah over the last cooler months. Maintaining the good staff culture we have is imperative to the Executive and our recent recruitment drive has secured some new people who we are confident will bring excellence in attitude and work, respect for our people and play a part in growing and improving the services offered.

We are pleased to welcome Anna Hay onto the team in an HR capacity. Anna's experience in managing change and growth while ensuring the rights and needs of workers and the organisation are well balanced and impressive. We are already seeing a shift for the better in our practices.

Growing interest in responding to the needs of families has led us to increase the provision of After School Care and Vacation Care with a newly created role to establish and develop it. While in its early stages of growth, indications are there is potential to provide a significant increase in our service once staffing is established.

A recent stakeholder survey was encouraging in its participation and feedback with particular emphasis from participants on the excellent response Warrah management and staff have made to the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no doubt this virus has unsettled and challenged everyone, staff and clients alike. However, it is with great pride and gratitude the Executive have noted that activities and service provision has been maintained as much as has been possible with minimal disruption. In-home services have increased and the quality of engagement has been exceptional. As we write this, the short and long term future of how we need to respond is uncertain but we are confident that Warrah can meet what comes towards us with a positive and proactive attitude.

Major renovations on Walumeda have begun with the generous support of almost \$600,000 worth of work, and an added bonus is the joy our school students have in watching the large machines and busy workmen each day.

Festival life has also changed in these times with them being celebrated internally. Unfortunately we are unable to share them with our community but we continue to bring this life giving and nourishing cycle of

the year into our days having celebrated a Lantern festival, and Winter Spiral and looking forward to each group celebrating Spring in the coming weeks.

There is always a gift in every obstacle or challenge and while the pandemic has provided more to deal with than we might prefer we have also had the opportunity to look at ourselves and our practices, build even stronger working relationships and connections and value the environment and possibilities our campus provides for adult participants and students alike.

David Forfar, Jan Fowler, Craig Gouws
Warrah Executive

VALE

Angus Hugh Knox Ross



It is with our deepest sorrow that we communicate the passing of Angus Ross.

Angus was a well-loved member of the Warrah community. Angus lived at Warrah for 39 years and was a resident at Semler Cottage in Thornleigh. He attended Warrah's Community Support Services at Kinta.

Angus had a distinct personality. He was shy, quiet and enjoyed his own space but also enjoyed the company of cheerful people. Angus was an animal lover, liked music, dancing and a cold light beer. He also had a good sense of humor.

We will find comfort in the precious memories of Angus Ross that remain close in our hearts.



Quality Assurance

It's been a busy time for Warrah Disability Services and Warrah Specialist School over the past few months. Both services have undertaken their registration accreditation. Warrah Disability Services have undertaken their NDIS Quality and Safeguard registration renewal which involved Warrah engaging an NDIS approved quality auditor to conduct an external audit of Warrah's policies, procedures and systems to ensure they meet the compliance requirements against the NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators. Whilst we are awaiting a final report I am pleased to advise that Warrah has maintained its compliance requirements with the conditions of our registration.

Warrah Specialist School has successfully undertaken their registration renewal. The National Education Standards Authority (NESA) has approved the new registration for a period of five years.

Parent/Stakeholder Survey

Warrah recently engaged an independent consultant - David Pul's from Becoming Change to conduct a parent/stakeholder survey. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who participated in the survey and provided their feedback. David has advised Warrah that we have had overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Whilst we have not yet received the final report from David, we are hoping to have some of the results from the survey available to publish in our next newsletter.

The feedback provided by our families and stakeholders is valued and important to Warrah. It provides Warrah the opportunity to re-evaluate the service and supports we deliver as a method of looking at opportunities for continuous improvement.

Warrah is committed to creating an environment which welcomes and encourages feedback at any time, not just through the completion of a parent/stakeholder survey. Please feel free to contact a Warrah staff member if you have any feedback you would like to share.

Kerrie-Maree Boorer
Quality Manager

What's Been Happening at Warrah?

Here are some photos of what participants have been up to recently.



Arts and crafts activities!



Celebrating Birthdays!



Keeping active!



Disability Services

COVID-19 continues to be a strong focus for us as we navigate our way through. Such a disruption to our everyday lives has really challenged us to think outside the box a little and change how we deliver some of our core services. The continual monitoring of developments, public health orders and government advice has been our staple diet for the past few months. As I am sure everyone is also experiencing, it has brought a new kind of fatigue with it. I must acknowledge the service managers who have been living and breathing our COVID-19 roadmap throughout this pandemic. Of course, it is our frontline staff providing the support every day who carry the burden of additional protocols to make sure all our participants remain safe. A huge thank you to all of them. There is information in this newsletter about our COVID-19 Pandemic Response Roadmap (see page 12). Please contact Warrah if you would like a detailed version.

We were successful in receiving a funding grant which has allowed us to commence the installation of 'vegepods', which are accessible raised gardens, into a number of our residential houses. These are perfectly timed for us to be planting out into the spring and will enable us to enjoy the benefits of gardening and some home-grown produce. A huge thank you to Cindy Cunningham for the work she has put into the grant application, and to Rob Greatholder for his input into the installation and setup.



Charles and Joanne planting out new vegepod gardens

I am pleased to report that Erin Bateman has taken up the role of Program Coordinator after several years working at Warrah School. This role will primarily sit in the Disability Services team reporting to Ali Pruys along



Disability Services welcomes Erin to the team!

with coordination of the After School Hours Program and Vacation Care through Warrah Specialist School. Erin has responsibility for coordinating the Short Stay Accommodation, In-home Support Services and the Saturday Connect program.

We are all looking forward to the warmer weather and a reprieve from the last few intensive months.

David Forfar

Executive Manager , Disability Services



Community Support Services

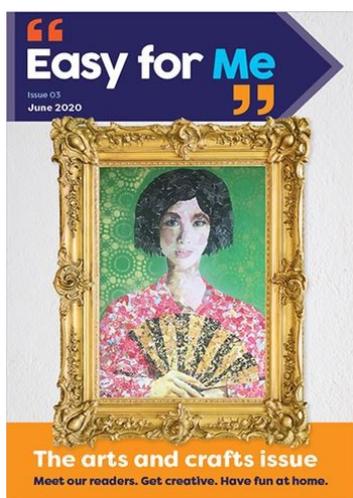
Earlier this year, when we were in the throes of crisis response, we developed a Pandemic Roadmap to serve as a guide for our community. At the time, we had assumed that we would be well on our way to resuming normal operations by springtime. Unfortunately, that has not been the case.

Navigating the ongoing pandemic has been relentless and at times, challenging. I want to give a big shout out to our direct support staff for taking it all in their stride; showing up each day, suiting up in their often uncomfortable PPE to keep our community safe and thinking outside the box to deliver engaging activities every day to our participants.

Many activities that are regularly on offer at CSS such as Men's shed, Beyond the Square drama groups, and RDA are still on pause, and we are still supporting a large number of participants from their home. Regardless of these challenges, we have had some great achievements over the last few months that I would love to share with you.

Each day we provide facilitated activities at Warrah's main campus. These activities are scheduled and attended in small or household groups. We offer music, clay work, felt work, weaving, watercolour painting and sports. Often these sessions are broadcast over Zoom so people who are staying safe at home can also engage and socially interact with their peers. It's been a great way to stay connected with some people choosing to remain on the Zoom session and chat well after the activity has finished.

A group of talented Warrah artists, Trudy, Rebecca, Lyndal and Julie had one of their collaborative portraits featured on the front cover of "Easy For Me" (June edition), a publication by the information access group.



Artwork by Trudy, Rebecca, Lyndal and Julie on front cover of magazine

In July we hosted a Christmas in July party. Each household group decorated their home, cooked a delicious feast then joined together over Zoom for some Christmas carol singing led by Mark.

CSS continues to take part in opportunities which contribute to the local community. During July, Warrah organised a pantry drive to collect non-perishable food and pantry items for Anglicare's Winter Pantry Appeal.



Matt (right) handing over donated items for appeal

Over 110 items were collected with Matthew taking them to the Dural Anglican church to hand over the items. Big thank you to everyone who donated!

Recently a group of people with goals focused on cooking have commenced a program cooking lunches for Warrah's school children; this has been an excellent opportunity to develop skills while making a valuable contribution to the community.

And to wrap up, I want to express a warm welcome to Erin Bateman who joins the CSS Leadership Team. I would also like to express my gratitude to the CSS Leadership Team. They have worked tirelessly to navigate the daily challenges while ensuring people continue to have opportunities to work on their goals.

Ali Pruys
Community Services Manager



Supported Independent Living

I'm hoping everyone is doing okay in these trying times. I would like to thank all the staff for the extra effort that they have put in during COVID-19. It has been a bit of a roller coaster but rewarding to see everyone step up to the challenges that we have faced.

Teamwork has been the key over the past few months, and I would like to thank all the staff for their dedication in making sure that all our residents are safe and still enjoying life even if limited at times. As follows is some updates from our group home Coordinators.

Emily
Over the past couple of months, the Emily cottage group has had to get used to some changes. Most services are now delivered from the house, and there have been opportunities for CSS staff to work with participants in their own homes.

Everyone has been keeping fit by going on regular walks around the neighbourhood. Michael has been busy helping keep the yard tidy. Trudy is often in the garden pruning bushes and sweeping pathways. Kate has kept busy with puzzles and craft projects and Nicole has been doing some wonderful knitting. She also has a visit every Thursday for lunch from David.

Nicci has been working on her living skills by helping

cook a meal for her house mates and helping maintain her living area.



Some of the Emily Residents enjoying a cup of tea

Greenway

The Greenway men have had a change of pace over the last couple of months with most CSS activities been delivered from the house.

All the men are in good health and have been enjoying doing cooking, arts and crafts and going on nature walks. David continues to get out for a bike ride a couple of times a week. Stewart continues his Tuesday 1:1 outings with staff, and has been going on scenic drives instead of visits into the city. Andrew has been going out with staff on a Tuesday evening to enjoy a nice meal. Damien has been going for afternoon tea every Saturday and Darren has started a new walking program to work on his health and fitness.



Damien enjoying Christmas in July with his house mates

Jacaranda

There has been some slowdown in outing activities. However, Lynda, Joanne, Peter, Robert and Charles have been busy participating in activities of their interest that are in line with Warrah's COVID-19 roadmap, including picnic lunches and sensory walks at Warrah, scenic drives, sensory music sessions at Jacaranda, and cooking sessions to name a few.

Participants and staff lit a candle at Jacaranda in memory of Angus Ross who passed away at the end of

May. Lynda, Robert, Peter and Joanne lived with Angus at Semler Cottage for more than ten years.

Tallowood

Tallowood has had a very active and fitness-focused lockdown. They have been walking around the local area, using walkways that all link together and go for miles. On the weekend all residents enjoy walking in Windsor, Glenorie or Dural and sharing a picnic.

Everyone is well and quite happy, considering they have not been visiting shops or cafes. Cooking skills are improving, as are household tasks. We now have a vegetable garden bed growing outside our front door. When Stephen and Sam go on home visits, the ladies go to pick them up on a Sunday after a walk on the harbour front at Rushcutters Bay.

Orana

Orana residents have enjoyed having some time at home. It has been an excellent opportunity to spend time getting to know all these beautiful individuals during the day.

Residents have participated in home activities such as cooking, gardening and some crafts. Residents have started going home for family visits which is very exciting for them to be reunited with their loved ones. Residents have also enjoyed barbecues on the weekend with some family and friends from Mac's cottage. Orana cottage is looking forward to participating in local community activities in the near future.

Redgum

Redgum residents have recently enjoyed going home to visit their families and have really liked the break. Residents have participated in bushwalking and long drives. They have also enjoyed music therapy at Redgum cottage.

Redgum also celebrated some birthdays over the last few months. During these challenging times, staff have maintained a safe and supportive environment, raising spirits with a positive attitude. Redgum is looking forward to getting involved in the community shortly.

Waratah

Kevin celebrated his birthday in May and had a party. Other happenings at Waratah include fabulous outings with a picnic to Warragamba Dam and West Head. Our residents also created a beautiful fruit bowl made at Clay work sessions at Warrah as a group.

The vegetable garden at Waratah has produced so

much excellent food, which is consumed at the dinner table. Our garden work is done by participants supported by CSS and they have done a fantastic job.



Waratah residents enjoying a visit to Warragamba Dam

Wattle tree

Wattle Tree have spent the last few months keeping nice and warm, entertaining themselves with a variety of activities. We never knew our residents and staff were so multitalented! We are so amazed and impressed with the bright ideas and the diversity demonstrated. So much for lockdown! Wattle Tree ladies opened up a whole new world of creativity, and all seemed to relish with the quieter, more relaxed pace.

Some of our activities have included arts and crafts, making regular cards for loved ones with photos. We have also been doing a lot of baking and making pom poms to hang on our lovely liquid amber tree.

Chris, Fiona and Belinda all enjoyed a break, each visiting family. Everyone is back at Warrah now trying our best to settle back into life as we know it with caution and ease. We are currently working on NDIS plans with an array of allied services to help all of us achieve the most we can from our chosen goals.

We all hope that COVID-19 will all be a thing of the past when we write in our next newsletter!

Macs

Mac's Cottage residents have been blessed with excellent health and happiness during these recent challenges that face everyone. We have been making an effort to stay fit and healthy by doing a lot of physical activities, breathing exercises, and healthy eating.

The fantastic organic produce from the Warrah Farm Shop, including lots of fresh biodynamic food grown on-site at Warrah on the farm has been an excellent gift to the health and wellbeing of residents,

We have been loving the music with Mark on Tuesdays via Zoom. We especially enjoyed Christmas in July when Mark gave a live concert of all the loved Christmas Carols and songs, live at Mac's. Ann Leighton loved it, and Richard Martin sang along in beautiful voice.

Torrs

All Torrs staff have been so wonderful in supporting Torrs residents during these different times. Many talents have had an opportunity to shine and the simple art of happy, healthy living has been modelled, encouraged and supported so wonderfully. A big, big thank you to everyone!

We have noticed how much time we actually spend driving around, doing drop offs and pickups, sports, shopping, events, catching up with friends, volunteering and so on.

A sense of home and family grew stronger over the past few months. The garden finally received the attention it deserved. A great outlet for all that extra energy! The results are many beautiful garden beds around the house, new mulch, and Emily's easy accessible, raised garden. A big thank you to Bunnings for donating this garden bed, and we got to taste our first proper home-grown capsicum!



Torrs residents enjoying the outdoors

Sandra Quisumbing

Accommodation Services Manager

May my soul
Bloom in love
For all existence

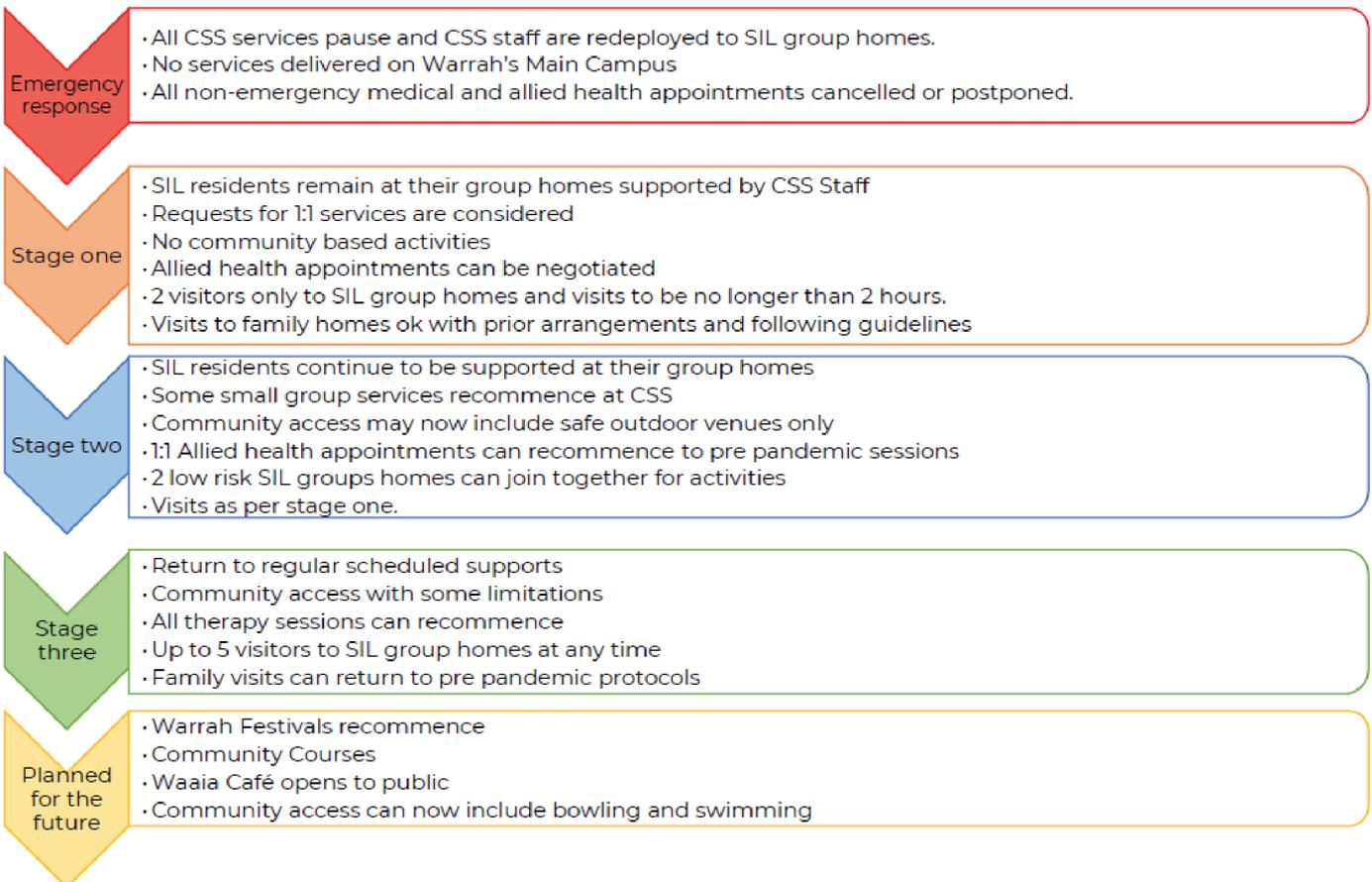
By Rudolf Steiner

Pandemic Response Roadmap

This roadmap is a guide for how we plan to safely support our community during times of crisis and has been developed in response to the COVID 19 global pandemic. Below is an overview of our Pandemic Response Roadmap. If you would like a copy of the details roadmap, please contact David Forfar or Ali Pruys.

The following Safe Service Practices are maintained throughout all stages:

- Social distancing of 1.5 meters
- Good hand hygiene wash or sanitize your hands regularly
- Good respiratory hygiene cough and sneeze into your elbow
- Follow building entry procedures including sanitizing footwear, keys and phone
- Signing in and out at each location to assist with contact tracing
- Do not come to Warrah if you are sick, participants or staff who show known viral symptoms will be isolated and sent home.
- Regular cleaning of hard surfaces and high touch areas
- All equipment is disinfected after each use and in between sessions.



Positions Vacant

After School and Vacation Programs

Warrah's after school and vacation care programs cater for students with intellectual disabilities, across all age groups. This service is provided to students attending Warrah Specialist School and also welcomes students who attend other schools within the Hills District.

We are looking for applicants with experience in disability support care and/or education support (preferably early childhood). Our after school team provides support to our students in a range of fun and educational activities including cooking, art, music, outings, sports and fitness, gardening and much more!

Shifts will be provided on Monday, Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays, usually 2.30pm-7.30pm with the opportunity for additional shifts during our 1 week vacation care program during the school holidays. There may also be some opportunities for work during the school day. As our program provides transport to and from the service, applicants require a full driver's licence.

Please email Evelyn ebush@warrah.org.au or Anna ahay@warrah.org.au or phone 9651 2411 for further information about these positions.

School Teacher

Due to increased enrolments for Term 4 and 2021, We are looking for a qualified school teacher to join our team at Warrah Specialist School, where we offer a caring and supportive community that provides quality and individualised education for students with disabilities. This position involves face-to-face teaching, lesson planning, involvement in school meetings, events and school professional activities.

We seek an experienced NESA registered and tertiary qualified teacher who aligns to our Rudolf Steiner philosophy and is committed to delivering individual education plans to our students. Academic learning is fostered through a range of traditional arts and crafts, including woodwork, weaving, music and drama; and other programs including cooking, gardening and farming.

Please email Evelyn ebush@warrah.org.au or Anna ahay@warrah.org.au or phone 9651 2411 for further information about this position.

Disability Support Carer

We are seeking motivated, empathetic and committed individuals to provide the highest quality person centred active support across multiple locations in the North West of Sydney.

Shift-work is required and may include weekends, public holidays, overnight, morning and/or afternoon shifts. Certificate III, IV or Diploma in Disabilities is essential.

Please email Evelyn ebush@warrah.org.au or Anna ahay@warrah.org.au or phone 9651 2411 for further information about this position.



Warrah Specialist School

School life is changing for the better with a curriculum that connects students to their natural environment sparking curiosity, interest and exploration. Each day begins with our Circle time, followed by walking in our immediate environment and discovering what lies above and around us (and what lives beneath our feet!). Some students love the detail and find the tiniest of insects or plants while others spot birds and changes in growth in the treetops. We have made a compass, found charcoal with which to draw, made clay rubbings, learned of all elements of plant and animal life, expanded our gardening knowledge and skills while also enjoying the fruits of this work in our daily lunches.

We celebrated our Lantern Festival as a school without the usual participation and enjoyment of having families share this time with us. However, students responded beautifully to the different mood, singing and listening with great joy for this experience of light in the darkness, hope amid uncertain times.

Apple picking provided a pleasant way to end Term 2 with all its restrictions on movement and outings. Students picked buckets of apples which were used for the winter spiral and of course the inevitable and very delicious apple crumble.



Ryan picking apples for apple crumble and the winter spiral

Therapies

Due to Stage 3 Health restrictions our Music therapist, Viktorija, was not able to come in for much of Term 2. But later in the term, we were lucky enough to share the singing brought by Mark with Adult services participants – all outside and with necessary social

distancing restrictions. Music is back in full now and is one of the most loved and inclusive therapies we offer the students. Its universal language helps us all cope with the anxieties and stresses of daily life. Mark and our Nordoff Robbin's music therapist, Viktorija, has returned recently and works with small groups once a week. Our students are now lucky enough to enjoy two music sessions a week!



Mark leading a music appreciation session

Louise, our new teacher, is bringing Bothmer Gym to the students once a week. When she last worked at Warrah, we were thrilled to witness amazing progress in individuals with balance, self-control, strength, concentration and mobility. Massage therapy has also returned for the students. This work supports the teaching and wellbeing of our students enormously, and Monika's experience and knowledge assist us in what work we bring to the students, and when we deliver it.

Staffing

After a term of face to face and remote learning for students, we have all staff back working in the school. Yong Kwang and Mike are full-time with Sally and Louise sharing a full-time role. Our work has been enhanced with the regular presence of Rob Greatholder (Therapeutic Gardener) two days a week.



Brayden and Xavier helping Rob at the Farm Nursery

Teachers and assistants are working daily with the Main Lesson through exploring and learning about the immediate environment. Themes in Term 3 & 4 are 'The Life Cycle' and 'Home Surroundings', bringing deepened awareness of living processes of plants, insects, birds and animals and who we share this place called Warrah with – on, below and above the ground. As you might imagine the interest and potential of this work is immediate and vast.

Claudette and Nalini (Senior Assistants) have stepped into providing storytelling and painting daily with a wonderfully enthusiastic response from many students who now love nothing more than to retell the story and often choosing to perform it. Louise introduced us all to chicken and duck hatchlings, and the wonder of life has been very present for all to see as they hatched and needed warmth, light and food to grow strong and thrive.



Art activities with Nalini

Enrolments

We have been thrilled to welcome new families with younger children into the school and expect to create an Early Childhood group in Term 4 with a Forest outdoor curriculum focus.

Students' attention and interest has grown significantly as we have worked further into our outdoor classroom work, and we are seeing what is documented in research in terms of connection, meaning and purpose realised.

Professional Development

We continue to work with John Lawry to support the unfolding of our new curriculum and ensure the understanding and quality of observation, skill development and individual work are appropriate and the best we can offer. Teachers meet weekly with John to review the week past and look to the week ahead. The opportunity to dig deeper is very much present, thus ensuring our value of ongoing self and professional development is promoted.

As with so many today, Zoom meetings have become the mode of meeting, communicating and training, and despite the frustrations of internet, we are managing to navigate this world well during these times.

Aside from the outdoor classroom, professional development staff have also participated in PART training (Predict, Assess and Respond to Aggressive Behaviour Training).

Volunteers

We are always grateful for the voluntary work offered in the school. Following the farewell of our German volunteers in July, we felt the gap in each day as they provided the students with the best of support, encouragement and learning opportunities. However, we recognise that it was a generous contribution that was always to end at this time and wished them every joy and success as they returned home to begin studies and reunite with family.

Given the travel restrictions currently in place, we will not be receiving any more students from Germany this year. It was, therefore, a welcome moment when we were able to offer volunteer places to 3 local people. Jess, Roxanna and Jan have all joined us bringing their enthusiasm and energy into the days they are at school. Working with volunteers is a gift we value greatly and hope that for them also it is an opportunity to grow and thrive as it is for us.

Moving Forward

Warrah School's journey is positive and full of potential and promise. As the weather grows warmer, we hope to see the effort put into nourishing the soil and seedlings, making our way into the bush and contributing to the spiral garden and pizza oven development, come to realisation. The completion of the mud hut building was something to celebrate – another first for us and proof that when one meets resistance with trust and encouragement, great things can happen. Wishing you all moments to notice the spring buds and early blossom, smell the new fragrances in the air and listen to the birds as they welcome warmer days.

Jan Fowler

Principal

Tops of trees
waving in the breeze
sky blue bright above
beauty to the eye
warmth to the soul
Nature's gift to all

By Patricia Walter



Staff and Volunteers

Our three remaining German volunteers Laurenz, Maren, and Nele left Warrah at the end of July after an interesting and challenging year spent here. They showed great character and dedication in fulfilling their commitment to Warrah through the COVID pandemic, and their contribution will be sorely missed at Warrah Specialist School. The school gave them a good send off to show our appreciation, and we wish them all well for their future careers.

It is unfortunate that this international program will not be able to run for 2020/1. As Australia's border remains closed to overseas visitors, we will be unable to have international volunteers next year.

New Staff

Below is the list of new starters who became part of the Warrah community:

Elisa Wright	Casual Support Worker
Muhammad Hossain	Casual Support Worker
Desmond Leu	Casual Support Worker
Ashima Sarker	Casual Support Worker
Jasbinder Kaur	Casual Support Worker
Aboubacar Sangary	Casual Support Worker
Pushpa Mendis	Casual Support Worker
Louise Swanson	Casual Teacher
Jessica Youell	Casual Teaching Assistant
Brooke Sara	Casual Support Worker
Anna Hay	People and Culture Manager

Evelyn Bush

HR and Payroll Officer

**PLEASE
SLOW
DOWN**

SPEED LIMIT REMINDER

We would like to remind everyone that the speed limit on the Harris Road campus is 10 Km per hour, so please drive carefully.

Be considerate of other road users and especially mindful of pedestrians who also use these roads around Warrah, and always have right of way. Remember to park in designated bays only and do not block access points.

Spring

All day long that magician
a warm west wind
has been turning the trees
into waving wands
and causing the leaves and flowers
or is it handkerchiefs of colour
to appear from out of
nowhere.

By Andrew Hoy





People and Culture

Thank you Warrah Community for the warmest welcome! As I drove into the Warrah grounds on my first day, I felt so thankful for the natural bushland environment in which we work. Instantly, I felt that sense of calm that is the essence of Warrah. I have really enjoyed meeting everyone, even if it has been from behind our face masks. I look forward to the day that we can again share some smiles.

I have a newly created position at Warrah as People and Culture Manager. So what does that mean exactly? *People* refers to each and every one of us, working together across a diverse business so that we can enrich the lives of people with disability. *Culture* is what makes our business unique – it's the sum of our values, traditions, beliefs, interactions, behaviours, and attitudes. Our culture at Warrah is influenced by many things, including workplace practices, policies, leadership and management. To be successful in future, this is an evolving process where the only constant is change.

We will soon be asking for staff input into our Culture Survey. This will allow shared feedback and ideas so that we can reflect and re-define what a positive workplace culture looks like for Warrah.



Anna collecting her weekly seasonal box from the Warrah Farm Shop

Anna Hay
People and Culture Manager



On Thursday 10th September, Warrah will recognise Australia's RU Ok? Day of action. Life has its challenges and 2020 has been a particularly difficult year, so this is a great opportunity to check in with each other and ask "Are you ok?" The Hills Daily Grind coffee van will be on site between 12.30pm and 2.30pm and all staff are invited to enjoy a coffee and chat with work mates to recognise the importance of mental health and wellbeing.

If you see someone who is struggling with life's ups and downs please do not ignore it. At Warrah, we provide independent, confidential counselling services to anyone who needs support through our Employee Assistance Program. It's as simple as calling the AccessEAP 1800 number or booking an appointment via the website. Contact AccessEAP on:

P: 1800 818 728 OR www.accesseap.com.au



Community Development

Tax Appeal: Outdoor Crafts, Skills Program

Thank you to all our generous donors who contributed to our recent Tax Appeal. During this time of uncertainty we were delighted that a total of \$37,484 was raised for the expansion of our Outdoor Crafts and Skills Program. Having the opportunity to pursue engaging and practical skills is an important part of our unique approach at Warrah. We are looking forward to introducing blacksmithing forge work, clay and pottery making and leatherwork. These new practical crafts will provide further learning opportunities, with therapeutic benefits for Warrah students and adult participants.

New Sound Systems

With funds raised from the 2019 Christmas Appeal, a new portable sound system for Warrah festivals, events, concerts has been purchased.

We have also been able to install a new PA (Public Announcement) sound system in the School Hall. This new system involved the installation of new speakers, and a mixing console with new wireless microphones. The system will be of great benefit for school concerts, school graduation, stage events, music and drama and for our Community Courses facilitators who require a sound system to deliver their activities.



New wall speakers and sound rack in the school hall

Financial Donations

In April we received a generous donation from the Rotary Club of Glenhaven of \$5,000, which was put towards the installation of the new PA (Public Announcement) sound system in the School Hall.

In May we received a donation from Manor Real Estate, based in Baulkham Hills of \$4,000. As part of their 'Give Back' initiative, Manor Real Estate donate a portion of their commission of sales each quarter to worthy organisations in the local area that they choose to support. This donation was put towards the 2020 Tax Appeal.

Donation of Sling

Warrah was donated a sling aid from Para Mobility for the spa hoist at Waratah Cottage. The sling attachment retails for \$780. The spa hoist, also recently donated by Hills Shire Council has now been installed, with residents now able to reap the therapeutic and recreational benefits of the spa.



Kevin and Adrian are very pleased with the new spa hoist at their home

Cultivating Wellbeing - Grant from Stockland

Warrah received a small grant from Stockland to implement a therapeutic gardening initiative with residents at Jacaranda and Tallwood. Two raised 'vegepod' garden beds have been installed between the houses to grow herbs and vegetables.

With the assistance of the Senior Coordinator – Therapeutic Gardening, residents helped with setting up the garden beds in late July. They planted lettuce, rocket, beetroot, leeks, kale, silverbeet, pak choi, parsley, mustard, tatsoi and allysum.

This initiative will cultivate not only fresh produce for the homes, but opportunities for health, wellbeing, social interaction and recreational enjoyment. We intend to roll out this initiative to the other Warrah houses.



Charles with one of the newly set up 'vegepod' gardens

2020 Arcadian Artists

The Arcadian Artist Exhibition and Art Trail has been cancelled for 2020 due to COVID-19. It normally takes place on the second weekend of November. Warrah has enjoyed being involved as an exhibitor for the last three years.

Campus Tree Planting

A campus tree planting activity was carried out to support National Tree Day (NTD). Unfortunately official tree planting events for NTD were cancelled due to COVID-19, so we decided to still get involved and plant in our own 'backyard'. The Hornsby Council Community Nursery donated over 120 plants which participants planted in the Banksia Leisure and Learning garden beds and in the recently cleared area behind Kaltenbach Cottage.



Rob and Kate planting some trees



Steve and Donna ready to plant their trees

Marketing and Promotions

The Community Development Team has been busy finalising the last of our three websites. The new Warrah Disability Services website was launched at the end of August. See www.warrah.org.au

The website has accessibility features, designed to improve the ability of people with disabilities to independently access the information on our website. The new website provides a fresh, more appealing and professional online presence.

We are already finding that the new school website launched in May is getting a lot of traffic and interest from potential parents who are contacting the school.

We have also rebranded our collateral suite including brochures, display banners and the school information pack, which is consistent with the look and feel of our new websites. This is an exciting step for Warrah's brand and has taken our communications to a more professional level.



Some of Warrah's new promotional brochures

Cindy Cunningham

Community Development Manager

Spring

Spring is coming, Spring is coming
Birdies build your nest
Weave together straw and feather
Each one doing their best

Spring is coming, Spring is coming
Flowers are coming, too.
Pansies, lilies, daffodilies
Now are pushing through.

Spring is coming, Spring is coming
All around is fair.
Shimmer, glimmer on the meadow,
Joy is everywhere.



Warrah Farm

The winter has been productive for our Warrah farmers. As the crops are taking longer to grow, we took the extra time available to clean up the summer growth, fix fences and gates, organise the shed and plan for the coming season.

We have received good soaking rains before spring, enough to give a boost to the first planting of warm-season crops, which will go in the ground very soon. Once the last frost is gone, the nursery will be full of basil, cucumber, zucchini, tomatoes and more! We look forward to a change in the rhythm and colour of the farm.

Also, during spring, we will stir and spread the biodynamic preparation 500. We do this vital process to return life and integrity to the soil, as we rely on the soil so much. By using the biodynamic preparation to enhance soil life, we ensure a healthy and happy farm. It is an exciting time of year for the farm, because as

we come out of the winter slumber and the soil begins to warm, we are able to grow a much wider variety of crops and flowers, and also make more compost than in winter time.

The last of the citrus will be picked soon, and the winter crops will make way for all the salad and fruiting vegetables of summer. The cool and comfortable working days will become longer and hotter, and the frantic pace of growing will greet us again.

Summer as a growing season is filled with produce, creation, teamwork and lessons for next season; it is a grower's favourite time of year. As I write this, we are currently harvesting silverbeet, coriander, broccoli, fennel, grapefruit, kale, leeks, orange, parsley, radish, rocket, and salad mix.

Cameron Quilty
Farm Manager

For a more wholesome inbox, sign up to our e-news!

Visit www.warrahfarmshop.org.au and follow the prompts or email farmshop@warrahfarmshop.org.au

Please vote for us!

Warrah Farm Shop is nominated for
Best Organic Retail Outlet
in the Organic Consumer Choice Awards.
Vote online 7th September - 9th October
vote at:

<https://www.organicweek.net.au/>

WARRAH
FARM SHOP
ORGANIC AND BIODYNAMIC





Warrah Farm Enterprises

'Unpredictable' certainly is the theme for 2020! In stark contrast to other winter holiday periods, we have had only the slightest lull in trading. The timing of the shop's recent expansion and the launch of the new Farm Shop website saw us perfectly poised, in both the digital and the physical world, to warmly welcome old and new consumers looking for a peaceful, well-stocked, safe and wholesome shopping destination. We are very grateful to have had the necessary space and energy for it all!

While we have sorely missed the routine of our regular interactions with Warrah Disability Services participants working around us, the global catastrophe has had one silver lining for us. We have experienced around 15% increase in turnover. The average basket size per customer has increased by between \$15-20 when compared to pre-COVID-19 times.

We were also able to be flexible and accommodate local customers in lockdown by doing home deliveries, and we have experimented with new hubs (one in Paddington and another at a café in Dulwich Hill). These temporarily filled the gap left when our regular weekly delivery to Billabong Yoga Retreat was suspended. While we have now stopped doing local home deliveries, we continue to offer customers the option to have orders prepared for collection, at a surcharge.

Our team has remained consistent and stable. The only change has been Cheryl opting to free herself up for new opportunities. We do miss her joyous laughter but wish her all the best. Stephanie, who has been with us casually for a whole year already has now signed a permanent contract.

We are incredibly pleased to offer our customers once again a regular supply of eggs from Mulloon Creek. Their chickens free range on biodynamic pastures. All the profits made by Mulloon Creek Natural Farms go to supporting the inspiring conservation and restoration work done by The Mulloon Institute. We love having opportunities to integrate even more goodwill and sustainability into our supply chain.

Given the ongoing public interest in home-grown veggies, we have stepped up to enable our customers to acquire the skills they need to flourish. Rob Greatholder has developed an Introduction to Backyard Veggie Course that he will facilitate between September and



Backyard Veg Workshops with Rob Greatholder

February 2021. The course consists of a series of four workshops - one for each season. Each workshop will have up to 15 participants getting their hands dirty right here on our farm. The course is being promoted to shop and co-op customers and has plenty of interest.

Happy Spring!

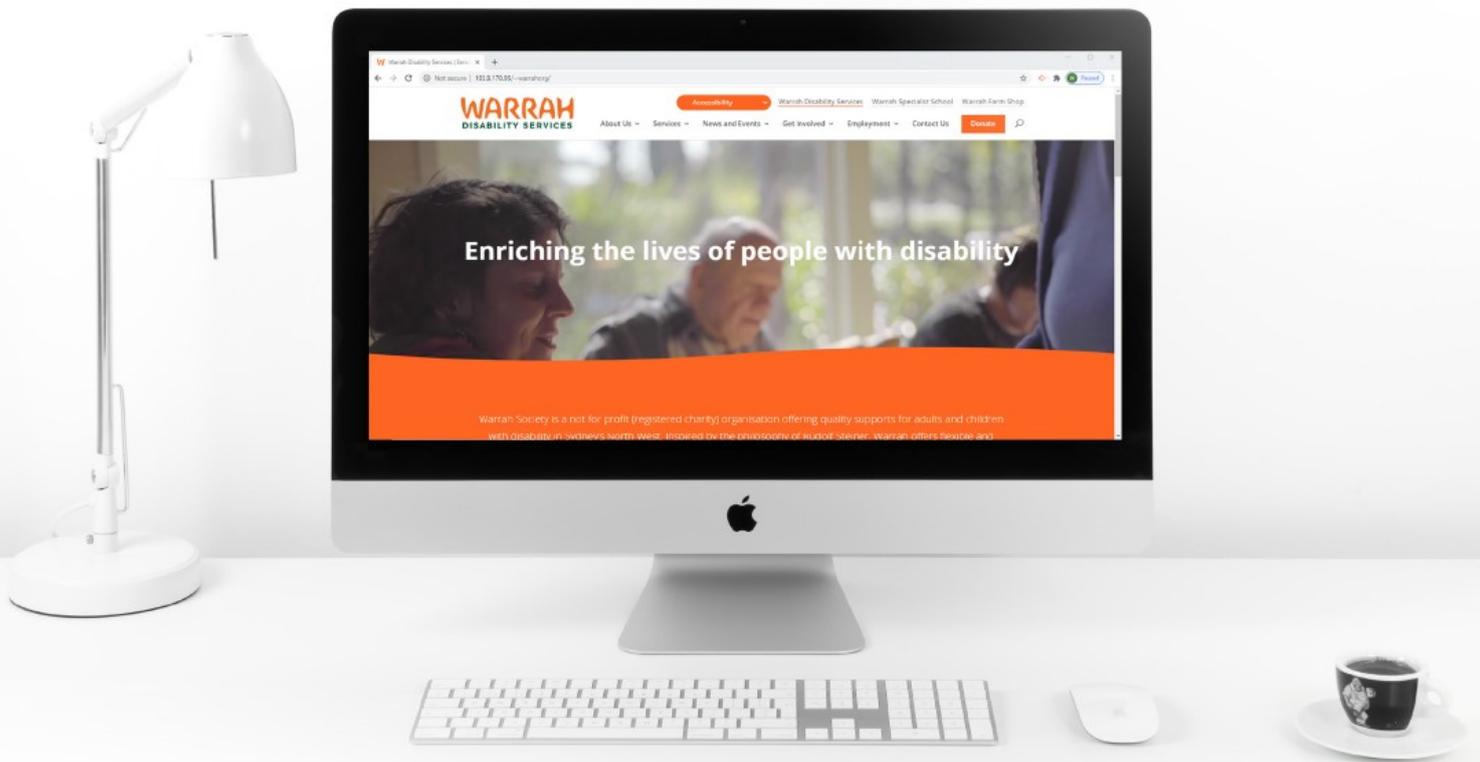
The Farm Shop Team

Spring Produce in Store

Greens - Cos Lettuce, Coriander, Black & Curly Kale, Parsley, Rocket, Baby Spinach, Salad Mix, Silverbeet, Pak Choi.

Fruit - Granny Smith Apples, Pink Lady Apples, Royal Gala Apples, Fuji Apples, Hass Avacados, Cavendish Bananas, Ruby Grapefruit, Honeydews, Kiwifruit, Lemons, Limes, Navel Oranges, Rockmelons, Tangelos, Strawberries, Blueberries, Passionfruit, Pineapples.

Vegetables - Green Beans, Beetroot, Broccoli, Broccolini, Green & Red Cabbage, Green & Red Capsicum, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Red Chilli, Lebanese Cucumber, Eggplant, Fennel, Garlic, Ginger, Leek, Mushrooms, Oyster Mushrooms, Brown Onions, Red Onions, Parsnips, Snow Peas, Sprouts, Swedes, Cherry, Roma, Gourmet & Truss Tomatoes, Turnips, Zucchini.



**We have a brand new website
for Disability Services!**

Go and visit:

www.warrarah.org.au