



WARRAH

LIVING LEARNING GROWING

Autumn News 2021

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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 ACNC charity.

Upcoming Events

World Down Syndrome Day

Friday March 19

Purple Day - Epilepsy Awareness

Friday March 26

Easter Festival

Thursday April 1st



'Poppy Fields'

Painted by Megan Davies

Easter Holidays

School - Easter Break

from Friday April 2 to Tuesday April 5

Farm Shop - Closed Friday April 2

Reopens Tuesday April 5

Office - Closed Friday April 2

Reopens Tuesday April 5

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www.warrah.org.au

www.warrahspecialistschool.nsw.edu.au

www.warrahfarmshop.org.au



From the Board

With the summer holidays firmly behind us, it certainly feels like things have started to get busy again at Warrah and despite the ongoing and intermittent disruption to some of our services as a result of the COVID-19 situation, it feels like many things are back on track. One thing we have thankfully been able to do a little more of, is meet face-to-face and for the board this is a refreshing development with all of our meetings having been conducted remotely since March last year with the exception of the AGM in November.



Warrah's Board of Directors.

From left to right: John Williams, Paul Power, Hannah Semler, Annet van Kesteren, Annette Waterson, Ross King, Steve Malin and David Ghannoum.

Board Governance Day

The end of January represented the first real opportunity to get together. The board held a full day workshop and governance day. As well as including our regular monthly meeting, it also included opportunities to self-reflect on our own performance as well as assess our skills and identify gaps and areas for improvement.

In one of our sessions we were delighted to have the opportunity to meet with Megan Maletic from Deloitte. Deloitte very generously approached Warrah for the second year running looking to identify a way in which they could contribute to our organisation as part of their own Annual Impact Day. We had an opportunity to work with their Strategic Consulting Team who spent time with all of our senior leaders late last year helping to map the organisations 'Business Chemistry' which (according to their

website!) is "used by hundreds of thousands of professionals around the world to build stronger relationships, increase team performance, and create exceptional organisations".

I found it to be not only insightful on a personal level but also a great way to highlight the differences in work styles and help us appreciate one another's approaches and that can only be a positive thing going forwards. Thanks again to Deloitte for this generous contribution to our organisation.

In addition, we were also delighted to be joined for a session by Chris Duncan who is the head of Governance for NSW Association of Independent Schools (AIS). Chris regularly lectures on governance, so it was very useful to have him join us for our discussion on topics such as governance best practice, managing conflicts of interest and understanding board roles and responsibilities. Chris' time was also donated under the framework of our membership of the AIS. Thanks again to Chris for making himself available for us.

Whilst it was the least structured part of the day, we also had time to enjoy a shared lunch with many of our managers. Such get-togethers have been sorely missed and it certainly added to that feeling of being 'back on track'.

New Executive Member

The start of the year has seen us welcome a new member of the team with Maggie White joining our executive team on an initial six-month contract to help us focus on some of our cross organisational growth initiatives.

For those that attended our AGM in November, you may remember that 'allowing some room to focus on targeted growth' was highlighted as one of the ways in which we are looking to tackle some of the challenges that we face. Whilst it feels like we are never short of good ideas, the reality of actually finding the time to



New Executive Member Maggie White

move the organisation forwards amid all the demands of day-to-day operations always feels difficult and it is hoped that by bringing Maggie on board we can inject some progress, especially in helping us move forward with a plan for the development of our Enterprise Hub. The 'Hub' currently consists of our farm, the shop, the horticulture operation and a fledgling bakery. Maggie has hit the ground running and has already been getting her hands dirty (well floury at least!). Maggie has some great past experience working in the disability enterprise area (including past experience in starting a bakery) so it's great to have her share that knowledge and expertise with Warrah.

As part of Maggie's remit the board has also asked her to help document and co-ordinate a series of strategic planning workshops involving our participants, the management team and the board over the next couple of months. The first of these workshops will take place the first week of March. Whilst more recently our planning has generally been short term focussed, it is always the case that a number of ideas are generated that fall into that medium/long term time window. These have tended to drop off the radar once everyone gets back to the grindstone. Maggie's working title of "Warrah 2040" is a great way to help us focus beyond the day-to-day and is an interesting method of framing a future for the organisation. We look forward to getting together and getting things down on paper.

Resignation of Craig Gouws

Also, on the topic of our Executive, it is my unfortunate job to inform you that Craig Gouws has resigned from his role at Warrah. Craig has been a valued member of the Executive team for over six years, providing leadership in Finance, Administration, Property and our Farm Enterprise. Warrah Board would like to extend their recognition and thanks to Craig for his contribution and commitment to our organisation over the years. Craig will continue to provide support to Warrah during a transition period, while we recruit a new Business Manager. We wish him the best of luck for the future.

We continue to navigate through our COVID-19 roadmap and are optimistic that an opportunity for a broader get together isn't too far away. We will keep you posted. In the meantime, thank you as always for your ongoing support.

Steve Malin

Chairperson, Warrah Board



Vale Wendy Newman

Sadly we have learned that Wendy Newman, a former employee at Warrah, passed away from cancer in early February.



Kevin, Wendy, Richard and Donna

Wendy worked as a young co-worker at Inala and knew all of the founders of Inala, including Kyra Pohl. She then worked at Warrah, as House Manager, then Residential Services Manager, retiring in July 1999 before moving to far North Queensland. She was well liked by fellow staff and Warrah participants.

Autumn

We give thanks for the harvest of the heart's work;

Seeds of faith planted with faith;

Love nurtured by love;

Courage strengthened by courage.

We give thanks for the fruits of the struggling soul,

The bitter and the sweet;

And for that which has flourished in warmth and

grace;

For the radiance of the spirit in autumn

And for that which must now fade and die.

We are blessed and give thanks.

Amen.

Michael Leunig

From the Executive

We have reached the end of another summer and have started the year with the usual bustle with participants returning to work, day programs, various activities and school. We are looking forward to what Autumn will bring.

It is very exciting to be able to eat our own bread, baked here on site at Warrah's very own bakery! Congratulations to Borja and the bakery team for a successful start to the bakery. It is well worth dropping in to the Warrah Farm Shop and grabbing a loaf. In addition, the new pizza oven was recently unveiled and tested using fresh ingredients grown at Warrah. By all accounts the oven produces delicious gourmet pizza. The oven was hand built from the ground up, including the making of the bricks, by our TAFE work skills participants under the capable guide of Rob Greatholder. Congratulations and a huge thank you to everyone who has been involved in the process.



Fawaaz cooking fresh gourmet Warrah pizza

Comings and Goings

Maggie White has joined the Warrah Management Team to look at organisational growth projects as well as managing the Bakery enterprises, the Farm and the Farm Shop.

We also say farewell to our Business Manager, Craig Gouws, who has been an important member of the Executive team, for over 6 years. We wish him all the best with his future endeavours.

Walumeda Update

The new Walumeda building construction and refurbishment of the existing building has unfortunately not progressed as swiftly as we had initially envisaged, however we are very pleased with the progress that Holdmark have made. The extent of rain days

experienced and the reported lengthy delays in the delivery of construction materials has contributed towards the construction delays. Holdmark remains optimistic that the works will be completed by April 2021.



Walumeda building development

The conditions imbedded in the development authorisations require Warrah to adequately prepare the School building as a building of last resort should there be a bushfire incident and exit from the site be restricted. These works entail the manufacture and fitting of ember protection screening at the School, and these works are currently underway. The Warrah maintenance team, headed by Richard, are working to the landscape plan and have purchased the necessary trees required in the development conditions and are now planting them according to the Council approved plan.

Warrah Houses and Facility Improvements

The Greenway kitchen replacement commenced during February and floor coverings were replaced at the same time. Assett Group were contracted to undertake the works and a \$25,000 grant received in November 2020



Greenway kitchen installation

from the Community Building Partnership Program 2020 contributed towards the funding. We are thankful for the assistance the Department of Communities and Justice have provided through this grant and the residents of Greenway will very much enjoy their new kitchen and flooring.

The Maintenance team have been repainting Wattle Tree following the replacement of window frames. The building is looking much better now. The ground works for the replacement of the old Yandina trampoline have also commenced.

New Solar Panels for Warrah Houses

Warrah is reducing its carbon footprint by installing additional solar panels on Emily, Greenway and Torrs houses. The energy consumption in our houses is high and much of the electrical consumption is during daylight hours when electrical tariffs are high. The solar panels will therefore reduce operating costs and these installations will go some way in reducing Warrah's carbon footprint. The Greenway and Emily installations are complete while the Torrs installation is expected to be completed in the immediate future.



Newly installed solar panels at Emily Cottage

Bushfire Mitigation Works

As a consequence of the fire threat experienced during the 2019/20 bushfire season Warrah has engaged Warren Smith & Partners as Hydraulic Services Consulting Engineers to investigate the capacity and reliability of the existing 90mm diameter cement Sydney Water main that services our property at 20 Harris Road, Dural.

Warren Smith & Partners have brought a number of issues to our attention which are of concern, including the age of the water main (82 years) which is well beyond its working life and should be replaced; the potential health issue of particles of asbestos in the pipe mixing with water in the water main; and the low

water flow and pressure of the water main which is totally unsatisfactory for drawing sufficient water for fire-fighting purposes and protecting Warrah's property and residents in the event of a bushfire or house/building fire situation.

Warren Smith and Partners have indicated, based on modelling that amplification of the existing water main to a 200mm diameter water main from Quarry Road to 20-24 Harris Road (approximately 1.4kms in length) would significantly improve water flow and pressure. With the assistance of Warren Smith & Partners, Sydney Water has been requested to consider the concerns identified. Sydney Water are yet to formally respond to the Warrah request.

Warrah Social Gatherings

This year we are planning to overcome many of the barriers that COVID-19 presented last year, in being able to gather for social events. We are particularly keen to come together for our regular festivals this year and we are already planning for how we can best achieve this. Details will be forwarded appropriately in due course.



Australia Day celebrations at Warrah

It is also a pleasure to say that the first of several planned talks on the work of Rudolf Steiner and Social Therapy has taken place. This step is one of many planned going forward to deepen the impulse and knowledge so all we do at Warrah is enhanced and informed by the founding impulse and its ongoing development. Should the easing of restrictions continue we will begin to implement our training program across the organisation.

Jan Fowler and David Forfar

on behalf of the Warrah Executive



Disability Services

We are fortunately seeing the easing of restrictions continue across NSW and the Greater Sydney region following the Northern Beaches COVID-19 outbreak at Christmas, which disrupted plans for a number of Warrah families. Special thanks to Sandra Quisumbing and Lezelle Spies who very quickly reworked rosters to ensure residents were able to celebrate Christmas despite not being able to get across to the Northern Beaches.

Our COVID-19 roadmap has been updated to reflect the most recent public health orders and was recently distributed to the Warrah Community. Our key strategies remain focused on social distancing and infection control. Sign in and out records will remain in place, as does the requirement for staff and visitors to wear face masks at all times when in our homes and service delivery facilities. Temperature checks for staff and visitors will still be practiced, while hand sanitisers will continue to be made available to everyone.

Visits to community-based facilities are now allowed. This includes cafes and shopping centres. However, we continue to discourage community access unless necessary, and will remain committed to ensuring good infection control practices are in place for both staff and participants, at home and in the community. In addition to that, we continue to discourage the use of public transport unless necessary.



Simon enjoying a milkshake at a local cafe

COVID-19 Vaccine

The COVID-19 vaccine is due to commence rolling out in Australia at the end of this month. Although the details of the vaccine availability for Warrah residents and staff isn't yet available, we have provided information to the

NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commissioner to assist with the roll-out plans. We have already commenced seeking consent from residents and decision-makers around the vaccine.

Participants of our Community Support Services, After School Hours Services, Saturday Connect and Short Stay Accommodation Services are encouraged to make their enquiries around access to the vaccine. We strongly encourage all Warrah community members to take up the vaccine, and anticipate the vast majority of our community will do so. We understand and acknowledge that this remains a personal choice, and as such, we will not be making the vaccination a requirement for participants or staff, unless mandated by the government. Please refer to the Australian Government COVID-19 vaccination factsheet insert.

NDIS Planning Meetings

The majority of our NDIS planning meetings have now finished and we are seeing some excellent outcomes for participants across all our program areas. This demonstrates the importance of the relationship we share with each of our participants which for the majority, has been built over many years of developing a highly trusting and collaborative approach. We are happy to work with families and planners to fully understand the goals and desires of each person and to develop our services in a personalised and responsive way.

David Forfar

Executive Manager, Disability Services

Housing Vacancy

Warrah currently has a vacancy within one of our Supported Independent Living houses, located in Baulkham Hills. This house would suit a participant aged 18 – 30 years. The home is a mixed gender house, but a female participant would be ideal. The home is an older style home, close to public transport and features an in ground pool.

Further information please see link below:

<https://gonest.com.au/property/08072019-spacious-home-in-baulkham-hills-baulkham-hills-2153>





Quality Assurance

Over the past few months Warrah has been supporting some of our Warrah participant's and their families to engage behaviour support practitioners to assist with the development of behaviour support plans.

I felt this is an appropriate time to provide information to our participants and their families and carers on the behaviour support requirements and Warrah's obligations.

As an NDIS Registered Provider, Warrah is responsible for having a positive behaviour support framework that focuses on evidence-based strategies and person-centred supports that addresses the needs of our participant's and the underlying causes of any behaviours of concern.

Warrah aims to ensure we safeguard the dignity and quality of life of our participants who require specialist behaviour support. Behaviour support is about creating individualised strategies for people with disability that are responsive to the person's needs, in a way that reduces and eliminates the need for the use of regulated restrictive practices.

Kerrie Boorer
Quality Assurance Manager

Behaviour Support

What is a restrictive Practice?

'Restrictive practice' means any practice or intervention that has the effect of restricting the rights or freedom of movement of a person with disability, with the primary purpose of protecting the person or others from harm.

There are five restrictive practices that are subject to regulation and oversight by the NDIS Commission. These are chemical restraint, mechanical restraint, physical restraint, environmental restraint and seclusion.

There are some circumstances when restrictive practices are necessary as a last resort to protect a person with disability and or others from harm.

What is a behaviour support plan?

A behaviour support plan is a document prepared in consultation with the participant, their family, carers, and other support people that addresses the needs of the person identified as having complex behaviours of concern. The behaviour support plan contains evidence-informed strategies and seeks to improve the person's quality of life.

Who can develop a behaviour support plan?

A behaviour support plan can only be developed by practitioners who are considered suitable by the NDIS Commissioner to undertake functional behaviour assessments and develop behaviour support plans. Behaviour support practitioners (whether a sole provider or employed by a provider) must be registered with the NDIS to provide specialist behaviour support.

How often do behaviour support plans need to be reviewed?

At a minimum, any behaviour support plan that contains a regulated restrictive practice needs to be reviewed every 12 months or earlier if the participant's circumstances change.

What needs to be reported to the NDIS Commission?

Any behaviour support plan containing a regulated restrictive practice must be lodged with the NDIS Commission. Warrah is required to monthly report the use of a regulated restrictive practice to the NDIS Commission.

If you have any further questions regarding behaviour support, please don't hesitate to contact me on 9651 - 2411.

Supported Independent Living



I hope everyone had a good Christmas with all the restrictions that were in place. Some changes had to take place with some residents having to remain at Warrah due to the Northern Beaches COVID-19 outbreak. This was a challenging time as they were unable to spend time with their families. However, everyone managed to adjust and enjoyed a lovely Christmas lunch.

I am glad to say we are back to Stage 3 of Warrah's Pandemic Roadmap and we are all able to go out to community activities even though there are still some restrictions still in place.

I would like to thank all the staff for their dedicated work in providing a safe environment for all our residents during these trying times.

Hoping things go back to some form of normality soon. Following are updates from our Group Home Coordinators.

Sandra Quisumbing

Accommodation Services Manager

Tallowwood

Tallowwood has had a pretty good summer with the cooler weather making outings to beaches and long walks possible. Everyone is well and fit.

Australia day week was an exception so we made use of our swimming skills and spent 4 hours at the wonderful Warrah pool relaxing in the shade and cool water and eating mangos and egg sandwiches.

The vegepod garden bed is a great success with care and love being shown by all. Sam Sarah and Stephen are all good waterers. We have produced chives, parsley all sorts of lettuce and spinach, kale, silver beet, mint, basil and beetroot. Herbs are picked daily to enhance flavour of dinner and a salad nearly every night.

We had a lovely Christmas party as usual but even more special as everyone hadn't been together since last Christmas.

Helen Macaskill

Tallowwood Coordinator

Jacaranda

It was a difficult beginning of the year at Jacaranda Cottage. Lynda, Joanne and Robert missed out on their holiday family reunion at Christmas due to illness.

However, things are now gradually getting back to normal at Jacaranda.

Peter and Lynda are good helpers around the house, getting involved in chores such as laundry, folding clothes, tidying the garden, and keeping the gravel driveway clear of dry leaves.

Jacaranda residents continue to enjoy their scenic drive on Saturdays, driving to Fagan Park, Rouse Hill regional Park, Bobbin Head, Glenorie Village and on Sundays they enjoy picnics at Warrah. Lynda and Joanne particularly love going to Kellyville village for coffee.



Robert celebrating his 60th Birthday

Robert enjoys visits from his sisters and recently celebrated his 60th birthday at Jacaranda, with family, staff and fellow residents. It was good time had by all. Charles has also enjoyed some recent visits from his sister Annabelle.

Claude Ouahia

Jacaranda Coordinator

Wattle Tree and Glenny

All is well at Wattle Tree and Glenny after having our wings clipped again with COVID-19 around Christmas



Caroline and Rebecca enjoying a visit to Sydney

time. We were all disappointed to have to pull the plug on our annual Christmas party with our loved ones at Wattle tree but the show must go on and we soldiered on with just the residents and staff. All the presents and delicious food made it a lot easier to deal with!

So here we are in the New Year and making up for lost time. The Wattle Tree girls are all looking beautiful in their new summer outfits and finding lots of excuses to wear them as they venture out and about. Chris, Fiona and Belinda are all making the most of their freedom now that restrictions have been lifted and planning their calendar. Chris and Fiona will visit Canberra soon after having to cancel their plans at Christmas. Belinda is looking forward to having Glenny all to herself and finally scheduling catch ups with her friends.

Wattle Tree is in the process of a makeover with Peter from maintenance doing a great job of giving the exterior a good lick of paint. Our garden is blooming with bright colours this year and we are so proud.

Leanne Burton

Wattle Tree and Glenny Coordinator

Waratah

Waratah residents have managed to get out to some really fun outings. These include The Secret Garden in Richmond, and Ballast Point Park in Birchgrove and visiting the Inner West of Sydney.



Waratah residents celebrating Australia Day

Waratah's residents have been making huge progress with their personal goals:

- Jacqueline has been attending Aqua Aerobics and gym classes regularly, and growing fitter by the week.
- Rohan has started his Hydrotherapy journey and is loving every minute. He also has a new CD player and has learned to use it very quickly.

- Adrian too is a big Hydrotherapy star. He goes every week on his 1:1 day and takes his support worker out for coffee afterwards!
- Kevin has also been having some more 1:1 with a support worker, giving him the opportunity of really working on his fitness and doing all the creative things he loves to do – painting, making cards, drawing and photography.
- Simon continues on a steep upward trajectory with his health. He is interacting with his housemates and has also begun to use his new iPad which was a goal of his.
- Amanda has joined a new day program 2 days a week. Waratah and her family are supporting her towards slowing down in life as she settles into life at Waratah.

Nicci Gilmour

Waratah Coordinator

Greenway

Everyone enjoyed the Christmas break, and we all enjoyed a great Christmas lunch at Greenway. Over the past three months it has been difficult to get out and about due to restrictions, however we have managed to keep busy and healthy. We are pleased that COVID-19 restrictions have eased.

All the residents have been going on regular walks and drives to get out of the house. Recently we went to Balls Head Reserve to have lunch in the park and enjoyed the view of the city. We are all very excited to be getting a new kitchen at Greenway which is coming along nicely.

Brewer Fayne

Greenway Coordinator

Emily

Everyone enjoyed the Christmas break, and the Emily residents made Christmas biscuits for their families. After spending some time with their family and having a break, they were all happy to return to their day programs and activities.

Over the past three months we have gone through various stages of being locked down. Despite this, we have managed to keep busy and get out of the house and enjoy ourselves.

We took a great road trip recently to Bilpin to enjoy some apple pie and we had a drive to Windsor to grab a coffee. We have had lots of in house cooking days and activities which residents have enjoyed.

Brewer Fayne

Emily Coordinator

Torrs

Torrs started the year with many new commitments. Terry and Megan started their new employment support in Blacktown. They enjoyed making new friends and learning lots about the workplace. Emily is back at work with Disability Services Australia in Blacktown.



Emily and Jacob taking a stroll in the park

Special Olympics has finally restarted after a long COVID-19 break and the residents are busier than ever with all their different sports. The drama team has reunited and a fantastic new musical is in the planning stage.

We have joyfully celebrated quite a few birthdays in the past few months.

Lisa Bendixen

Torrs Coordinator

Orana

Orana residents have been enjoying attending their day programs. It's been great for residents to now be participating in the community. Residents have been enjoying weekend barbeques at Orana with friends from other houses. Residents have some weekend day outings to places like 'Pie in the Sky at Bilpin' and to Brooklyn. Orana team are hoping for more weekend outings throughout the year.

Lotti Roberts

Orana Coordinator

Red Gum

Red Gum residents have been more active this year, enjoying bushwalks and getting out more on the weekends. Residents enjoy going on nice drives around Sydney. Residents are glad to be back at day programs

doing different activities throughout the week. Red gum are looking forward to possibly a short holiday in the coming year.

Lotti Roberts

Red Gum Coordinator

Macs

Opportunities to have fun and share experiences with others is a priority for Richard, Stephen, Ann, Ingrid & David at Macs Cottage. Christmas Day was a little different for Macs but it was a great chance to relax and enjoy each other's company. Mutual support and understanding of each other and the blessing of being part of a community like Warrah has inspired the Macs group to weather a challenging season through COVID-19.

Stephen and David were delighted to prepare and present a Christmas Gift of produce and delicacies from the Warrah Farm Shop to exercise physiologists/physios at Lakeview Private Hospital, in appreciation for the outstanding therapy they have received throughout the year in the hydrotherapy pool and physio gym. Ingrid, Ann, Stephen and David also kept up their therapies throughout the Christmas holiday period.

At the end of February Macs Cottage received their two raised 'vegepod' garden beds. The residents helped to plant out the new raised garden beds with vegetable, herb and floral seedlings.



Macs residents planting out their new raised garden beds

Experiences, both shared and sensory, and building relationships with others is what the Macs resident love the most.

Melissa Templeton

House Coordinator



Community Support Services

The year commenced with a bit of a false start in Community Support Services (CSS). We were impacted yet again by a COVID-19 spike in community transmission, resulting in a cancellation of CSS services and redeployment of CSS staff to Warrah Supported Independent Living (SIL) group homes for the first week of the year. We feel relieved to have that behind us, and at the time of writing, case numbers in NSW have been at zero for several weeks, allowing us to run our programs with minimal impact. Of course, we continue to follow all strategies as outlined in Warrah's Pandemic roadmap.

Our Community Courses have restarted in term one with healthy enrolments in all courses. They are currently open to Warrah participants only. However, we hope to offer term two courses to community members providing our COVID-19 strategies allow it at the time.

I wrote in the last newsletter about the significant increase in 1:1 support for our participants. We have now initiated these supports. You will be able to read about some of the opportunities this has created in the service reports below!

I want to extend a warm welcome to one of Warrah's residents, Steven Cohen, who has chosen to take a step back from work and attend CSS one day a week. Following is an update from the CSS Service areas.

Alida Pruys

Community Services Manager

Discovery

Our term one program is fully underway at Discovery. Participants enjoy our farm and garden activities, including packing the fruit and veggie boxes and making deliveries to various places in the community. We are pleased to be part of the new Bakery project to explore participant's interest in baking bread to be sold in the Warrah Farm Shop.

With Riverside drama workshops still online, Zac and Ben have taken the opportunity to try another drama class. They have joined Studio Q run through The Joan Performing Arts Centre in Penrith for their drama workshops this term.

TAFE has recommenced this year with participants enrolling in Certificate 1 in skills for Vocational Pathways course. The TAFE group continues working on the construction of the new Horticulture Therapy

garden, part of the existing Spiral Garden.

We farewelled Christian from Discovery and we wish him well with his new endeavours.



Warrah's TAFE students receiving their end of year certificate

Yandina

At Yandina we are all excited about what 2021 has to offer us. Most participants have had an increase in supports after their NDIS review meetings which has provided increased opportunities to work towards goals. We are exploring new ways to expand social opportunities such as arranging a meet up with a few of the Banksia participants for morning tea and chat. While out in the community, we have also been able to explore some different venues. Everyone enjoys getting together for Mark's weekly music therapy sessions. Participants continue to visit Waaia on Fridays for morning tea at the Waaia Café, followed by getting together to contribute to Yandina's weekly BBQ.

Liesel Wakeley

Coordinator Discovery and Yandina



Sol and Danny having morning tea at Waaia Cafe

Banksia Community Centre

During summer the Warrah pool was utilised most days to its full extent. Aqua aerobics, recreational swimming and interactive games are all played in the pool. In 2021 Banksia will offer a wide range of activities throughout the year, including swimming, art, weaving, craft, felting, needlework, knitting, gardening, shopping, bushwalking, campus walks, a recycling program, music, Zumba and exercise.

In our Art program, participants get to experience a wide variety of artistic mediums including painting, collage, clay work and felting, amongst other things. We hope to enter art shows again this year to exhibit the artworks of our participants.

We have been joining Marianne at Kinta for weaving once a week and have made lovely pieces, including bags and wall hangings that the participants can take home. Our exercise to music program is loved by staff and participants alike. We continue with music every Tuesday at Banksia, and it's a highlight of everyone's week when Mark comes with his guitar. Hydrotherapy sessions at Lakeview continue to be enjoyed by all who have been involved and the best bit is the coffee at the end!

The candle making group made candles for Valentine's Day which were sold around campus. The group plans to make candles for all occasions and will be selling the candles throughout the year.

Cooking groups every week prepare mouthwatering dishes and work to achieve individual life skills and social skills of participants.

Manjit Kaur

Coordinator Banksia Community Centre

Waaia, Kinta and Diramu

Our staff are committed to a year ahead of fun and new experiences for participants. Our days are busier than ever as people access a range of different therapies including: exercise physiology, hydrotherapy, massage, participating in community contributions, visiting community venues and local experiences (our new favourite is Bobby's Bakehouse at Dural for fabulous coffee!). Participants are enjoying the Community Courses which commenced on 9 February designed for skill-building, health and fun times. These courses are a great way to catch up with friends from other Warrah CSS service areas.

Thank you to David C, Kevin, Donna, Emily, Jacob, Richard and Pam, who volunteer to prepare the Warrah School children's healthy lunches three days a week. They are putting their cooking skills to great use. Thanks to Matt B for all his hard work in our gardens, pruning and tidying!!

We gathered to celebrate Australia Day, enjoying

Jacqueline and Ani's homemade lamingtons, with some live Aussie music, and Robert Klabber's Aussie flagged succulents.

Lisa Rutkin

Coordinator Waaia, Kinta and Diramu

After School Program

We are starting 2021 with a mixture of new and old students and a new program for the After School Program. We have a total of 10 students, 5 of them new and we pick up kids from The Hills School, Tallowood School, and of course Warrah Specialist School. Monday is 'Music with Mark' which is always a hit. Tuesday we're following up on the success of the soccer program from the All Abilities Hills Football and continuing to develop our skills. Wednesday is gardening with lawn mowing and a refresh of the Yandina yard. Finally Thursday is a bush walk and sausage sizzle at Fagan Park.



Aidan watering the plants at Yandina

Short Stay

Short stay has been busy and is continuing to offer wonderful, personalised weekends away. They've been feeding pelicans at Woy Woy, picnicking at Central Gardens in Merrylands amidst the animals and enjoying the Warrah swimming pool. 2021 is filling up fast. More information about our Short Stays can be found on Warrah's website.

Saturday Connect

The Saturday Connect program took a small break over the Christmas period but started up again in January. They've been busy! Hiking, cooking, going into the city to see exhibits among other fun activities. It's such a great program and so nice to see such great smiles!

Erin Bateman

Program Coordinator



Social Therapeutic Gardening

Our TAFE group has swelled a little this year and we are pleased to welcome Steven C, Trudy, Fawwaz and William G into the group. The raised walled garden that we completed before the end of the year is thriving and full of delicious produce for use on the freshly baked pizzas that have started coming from the oven that the participants have made. It has been a lengthy process but Oscar lighted the first fire recently as we shared the first of many pizzas together. We look forward to welcoming the Warrah community into the garden and feeding everyone from the wood fire.

Work on the central structure has started again and we have begun to construct the walls. For this, our participants are using a traditional Japanese method of earthen construction called 'Shinkabe'. Firstly, we built a brick wall base two courses high and then have constructed a bamboo lattice framework to sit on top. We cover the lattice in a mixture of clay, sand and straw to form the walls, followed by a fine earthen plaster to finish. All the work has been as hands on as possible with everyone involved in the process to some degree. Once the walls are done, we will build seating to follow the curve of the wall. Several more raised gardens are under construction as the participants gain experience in the art of bricklaying and landscaping.



Warrah participants building the central structure in the Horticulture Therapy Garden

I am also pleased to have recently received a number of raised 'vegepod' gardens that we will be installing



Aerial view of the Central Structure

over the next few weeks. Terry and Richard have been helping in the construction of the pods with Mac's cottage receiving their two at the end of February.

Terry and Richard have also been busy enhancing and maintaining a client's garden in Kellyville. Terry installed a vegetable garden and is responsible for the fortnightly maintenance of the lawns and hedges around the property. He is learning valuable skills along the way and the feedback has been fantastic. He is doing such a great job that we now have others approaching us for the same service. Congratulations Terry!

Anthroposophy Lecture Series

In February we ran the first Anthroposophy Lecture with Guest speaker John Pater – Chairperson of Lorien Novalis Rudolf Steiner School and a member of the Board of Directors of the Sydney Branch of the Anthroposophy Society, at our School Hall. It was a great success with over 20 staff attendees.

We have just confirmed the next Lecture in the series, to be held in the School Hall on March 17- "*Disability: A sacrificial gift to the Carers*". This lecture will discuss Steiner's indications were that disability was a process from one life to another and that after the disabled life there would be highly likely to be an almost genius life. but more important than that was the gift to the carers of patience and loving. Please refer to page 19 for more details.

Rob Greatholder

Senior Coordinator – Therapeutic Gardening

Yellow the Bracken, golden the sheaves.
Rosy the apples, crimson the leaves
Mist on the hill sides, clouds grey and white
Autumn good morning... Summer good night!

Florence Hoatson

Community Education Courses & Workshops Term 2 Guide 2021

Community Courses and Workshops provide high quality learning opportunities for people with disabilities. Courses change each term, and include offerings from the Arts, Health & Wellbeing and Food and Horticulture.

The course fee is billed directly to you for the term and includes all course materials.

Support costs can be billed by Warrah through your NDIS plan. This will be agreed with you before commencement of the course.

Social Music

Facilitator: Mark Hellmrich
Date: 10 weeks – Tuesdays
20/04/2021 – 22/06/2021
Time: 9:30am – 10:30am
Venue: Kinta
Course Fee: \$100



Social music is about coming together in a creative space to make music with old friends and new. This group is about sharing a love of music and having fun! This group will enjoy and appreciate a variety of musical instruments, genres and techniques. If you have an instrument please bring it along. This course is open to all, regardless of ability.

Drumming Circle

Facilitator: Mark Hellmrich
Date: 10 weeks – Tuesdays
20/04/2021 – 22/06/2021
Time: 1:30pm – 2:30pm
Venue: Diramu
Course Fee: \$100



Drumming circles are fun, noisy, and full of rhythm, laughter and unexpected discoveries about ourselves and our place in the world.

In these sessions our facilitator will guide the group through simple rhythms. Gradually, the beats become more complex and the participants begin to choose their own musical expression.

Zumba

Facilitator: Nina de la Cruz
Date: 8 weeks – Fridays
30/4/2021 – 18/06/2021
Time: 1pm – 2pm
Venue: Warrah Campus (TBC)
Facilitation: \$128
Course fee: \$128



Zumba fitness is a Latin-dance inspired workout that involves a fun fusion of dance moves from styles like Salsa, Merengue, Reggaeton and Flamenco.

It is one of the most popular group exercise classes on the planet with over 12 million participants. Join Nina to groove your way into a healthier body and mind!

Pottery for Gardens

Facilitator: Julie Scott
Date: 8 weeks – Thursdays
29/04/2021 – 17/06/2021
Time: 10am – 12pm
Venue: Diramu
Facilitation: \$168
Materials: \$20
Course fee: \$188



This course will be interactive and creative! Learning to craft clay into fun garden sculptures and practical pots and pieces to use in your garden or to give as beautiful gifts to loved ones.

Come, Little Leaves

“Come, little leaves”,
said the wind one day.
“Come to the meadows
With me and play.
Put on your dresses
Of red and gold.
For summer is past
And the days, grow cold.”

Soon as the leaves
Heard the wind’s loud call,
Down they came fluttering,
One and all.
Over the meadows
They danced and flew,
All singing the soft
Little songs they knew.

George Cooper



Warrah Specialist School

While it feels like Autumn arrived earlier than usual in Sydney we have been full of the busyness and activity that summer brings these last months at school and in preparation for another school year.

Warrah Specialist School is thriving and growing as the program “speaks” to students in a way that engages their interest, fosters team work and socialisation and provides abundant opportunities for initiative, self-direction and perseverance to be established. This year will see the first stages of our blacksmithing program begin but prior to that we anticipate moving woodwork to the lower playground so it is accessible to school and Discovery participants.



Brayden skillfully constructed and painted a blackboard in woodwork



Ethan shows wonderful concentration and skills in woodwork

2020 Graduation

Last year Josh Tanna graduated at the end of the year. Josh had attended Warrah School for many years and impressed us all with his athleticism, excellent timing and frequent laughter and we wish him and his family well. Josh’s graduation was celebrated in the rain as part of our end of year play and Christmas celebration.

We also celebrated the end of the term with a visit to the Shine Shed (an all abilities play centre) which is wonderful fun for all (including staff we discovered) and was a great way to channel the typical pre-Christmas excitement.



Josh and his parents being presented with his graduation gift



We wish Josh all the best for his next chapter

Outdoor Classroom Curriculum

2020 saw the culmination of the first year of our Outdoor Curriculum. Students became familiar with Warrah from so many perspectives – knowing the quadrants, awareness of the seasons, life and plant cycles, soil and minerals, birds and the bee hive activity.

They also developed their skills in weaving, woodwork, farming, work experience (at Endeavour workplace), cooking, bush walking, crafts, mudbrick building and so much more – there is a hum of activity throughout the day. This year it is even more developed and refined with a significant step towards immersion to foster deeper skill development. We have taken up residence in Kaltenbach Cottage this term to provide a learning space for our senior student group and a place where the skills and practice of daily living can take place.

Staff and Students

Numbers have grown in the school in students and staff and it is with great joy that we now have an Early Childhood group and a senior school transition group along with many students in between both. We are also frequently supported by volunteers and able to assist TAFE students by taking them in as placements. It is our experience that these people give so much to us all when they bring their skill and enthusiasm to school students. We currently have one TAFE placement student and 3 volunteers. At the time of writing we had 26 students enrolled.

Vacation Care

The school is slowly but surely building its Vacation Care program with great success. It is expected we will offer some days each holiday break in 2021. A themed approach ensures the days are exciting and engaging for students.

With the changes that the pandemic can bring so quickly it is not expected we will be going on outings this term but with so much happening at school we know the students will be fully and actively immersed in learning and growing. As well as the activities mentioned above we will be working in the bakery and packing for the food co-op.



Jasmin swimming in Warrah's onsite pool, during our summer vacation care



Students love to cook in our vacation care programs



Melanie enjoyed the bubble ball play during vacation care



William and Chloe preparing wool for weaving

We are all looking forward to an engaging year ahead.

Jan Fowler
Principal



Staff and Volunteers

Warrah staff numbers continue to grow with a 10% increase in headcount since February 2020. However, the volunteering has noticeably been impacted by the restrictions introduced through COVID-19. We are starting to get new enquiries again about volunteering. One TAFE work placement student has now become an employee and another has offered to do further volunteering at Warrah in the future. Other enquiries have been received about volunteering in the school and on the farm which we will hope will eventuate shortly.

NDIS Worker Screening (NDISWC)

As from 1st February 2021 the NDIS introduced their own worker screening which is a national check for key personnel and employees working with NDIS providers. This check will be introduced at Warrah largely to replace the Working with Children Check (WWCC) which is a current requirement for all staff and volunteers. However, dependent on role responsibilities, a few staff will now be required to have both the WWCC and NDISWC in place. The NDISWC will help to ensure that key personnel and workers do not pose an unacceptable risk to the safety and wellbeing of the NDIS participants we support.

New Staff

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

Emily Briffa	Sales Assistant
Maggie White	Organisational Growth
Lisa Mufiri	Casual Support worker
Shirley Kennedy	Casual Support Worker
Di Fan	Teaching Assistant
Cristy Dickson	Casual Personal Care Support Worker
Soumya Anish	Teaching Assistant
Lauryn Hill	Casual Support Worker
Joanne Cordery	Casual Support Worker
Ralph Saunders	Casual Support Worker
Tegan Dennehy	Casual Support Worker
Zakia Parveen	Casual Support Worker
Sheema Patton	Casual Support Worker



Former Warrah employee, Eva is now volunteering at Warrah on Tuesdays

Evelyn Bush

HR and Payroll Officer

Staff Positions Vacant: Casual Support Workers

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

You will have a genuine interest to assist individuals in their home and in the community, supporting their personal growth in a number of areas including lifelong learning, leisure, self-care and health and wellbeing, meal preparation and domestic assistance, whilst supporting positive interpersonal, social and community relationships supporting individuals to achieve personal fulfilment.

We are accepting applications from flexible, reliable and resilient candidates, who are passionate, willing and able to mentor, inspire and support individuals to exercise contribution, self-determination and choice over their own lives.

Candidates will need to be available to work on a shift - work basis; this may include a combination of weekends, public holidays, overnight, morning and afternoon shifts.

If you are interested in working in a dynamic and supportive workplace that makes a positive difference in the lives of the residents we support please send your CV and a cover letter addressing the selection criteria to Evelyn Bush at ebush@warrah.org.au For more information, please call 9651 2411.



People and Culture

Deloitte IMPACT Day

Warrah was fortunate to be part of the Deloitte IMPACT Day on Thursday November, 2020. IMPACT Day is a day where Deloitte people worldwide put their passion and skills to use for the benefit of their communities. Their strategy team delivered a Business Chemistry workshop to managers and the board, which required everyone to consider and contrast their personal work styles. It was a fantastic opportunity to reflect on the importance of ensuring the right mix of business chemistry to be truly successful as a team and deliver value to the wider organisation and our participants.

The Four Business Chemistry Work Styles



PIONEERS LOVE EXPLORING NEW POSSIBILITIES. THEY PARTICULARLY ENJOY WORKING WITH OTHERS AND GENERATING NOVEL IDEAS.



DRIVERS LOVE A CHALLENGE. THEY VALUE COMPETENCE AND PARTICULARLY ENJOY A SHARP MIND OR SHARP WIT.



INTEGRATORS ARE ALL ABOUT CONNECTION. THEY VALUE MEANING AND ENJOY EXPLORING DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OR PERSPECTIVES.



GUARDIANS VALUE STABILITY AND STRIVE FOR ACCURACY AND CERTAINTY. THEY FOCUS ON DETAILS AND ARE KNOWN FOR BRINGING ORDER TO CHAOS.

Elmo Comes to Warrah

In February, Warrah commenced implementation of a new payroll and HR system called ELMO, which will streamline and integrate all our HR processes using one technology platform. ELMO's self-service dashboard will enable managers and staff direct access to HR policies, processes and tools and will enhance communication through reminders, messaging and a survey tool.

ELMO's training course library will offer over 400 courses that are kept up-to-date with legislative changes to ensure continued compliance and training solutions that can be customised to meet individual training needs. The first module to go live is recruitment and a cross-organisation team has been formed to review our processes and launch the module. We will keep you updated as we progress with this exciting project.

Naming Competition

As much as everyone loves our friend ELMO, we are currently running a competition to name and brand Warrah's new HR system. All creative ideas are welcome by March 20th, and can be emailed to Anna Hay at ahay@warrah.org.au—we look forward to your input!



Anna Hay

People and Culture Manager

Warrah Anthroposophy Lecture Series

Wednesday 17 March

Disability: A Sacrificial Gift to the Carers?

The organisation is delivering a series of lectures to help educate and strengthen the understanding of Warrah staff, volunteers and Board Directors on Warrah's philosophy.

At this lecture Karla Kryer will discuss Steiner's indications were that disability was a process from one life to another and that after the disabled life there would be highly likely to be an almost genius life. but more important than that was the gift to the carers of patience and loving.

Guest Speaker: Karla Kryer

Karla Kryer is a psychologist who has worked within the Anthroposophical movement for decades. Karla is passionate about the alchemy of life processes, and people's capacity to achieve freedom.

Karla is a unique and dynamic speaker who has a keen interest in listening to her audience. She is sure to provide a lively afternoon with plenty of fascinating information about Steiner's view on disabilities in an open honest discussion.

Cost: Free!

Where: School Hall

Time: 4.00pm - 5.30pm
(lecture followed by a discussion)

Refreshments Provided

NO RSVP REQUIRED

Contact Rob Greatholder for questions
0422 031 083 or rgreatholder@warrah.org.au



Community Development

Annual Christmas Appeal

Our annual Christmas Appeal for a new in-ground trampoline and shade sail raised \$10,480. In early December, a cheque of \$500 from the Commonwealth Bank Dural Branch was presented to Warrah participants and was put towards the Christmas Appeal.

Unfortunately, the funds were not sufficient to procure a shade sail. However, works have started on excavating the area for the Olympic size trampoline. The new trampoline will greatly benefit and support Yandina participants and external students who attend Warrah's After School Hours program, providing a sensory, therapeutic and recreational activity.



Works have commenced at Yandina to install the new trampoline

Northern Sydney International Day of People with Disability Art Competition

Warrah submitted 9 artworks produced by Warrah participants in the Northern Sydney International Day of People with Disability Art Competition, in early December. This was organised through the NDIS Uniting Local Area Coordination. The artworks were displayed at the Manly Corso and some of our participants went along to see their artworks on display.

The artwork finalists included:

Trudy Peek and Sarah Tierney - *Judges Choice Category* ('Flower Splash') – 2nd

Rosemary Milne - *Under 18s Category* ('Lion') – 2nd
 Jacob Short - *Drawing Category* – ('Birds of a Feather') – 2nd
 Kevin Kendall - *Digital Art Category* ('Wisteria at Waaia') – 3rd
 Zac Brenton - *Painting Category* ('Boats on the Water') – 3rd

This was another great community opportunity for Warrah to be involved in and participants received a merit certificate for being finalists.



Sarah and Trudy proudly standing in front of their artwork at Manly

Community Service Day for Redfield College

Ten students from Redfield College visited Warrah Specialist School in late November as part of their Community Service Day. They did a wonderful job and completed a range of tasks. They tidied garden beds, did general gardening, assisted to set up for the end of year school concert, and washed the school buses. They were an impressive bunch of boys, full of energy and goodwill.



Redfield College students assisting around the School

Thanking Donors

In May 2020, Warrah received a donation from Manor Real Estate, based in Baulkham Hills of \$4,000. Due to COVID-19, participants were unable to visit them to show our appreciation. In December we planned to visit the Real Estate with Warrah participants, however, tightened restrictions were imposed once again, so unfortunately Warrah residents from Waratah were unable to attend. Staff from Manor Real Estate were grateful for the Warrah artwork and certificate they received as a thank you.



Visit to Manor Real Estate to thank them for their generous donation

Give Now

We have set up a fundraising page on a platform called 'Give Now' which is a free portal for not-for-profits to fundraise at no cost. This page can be customised for all types of projects and causes. A page has been set up specifically for the Farm Shop to raise funds for bakery equipment. See: <https://www.givenow.com.au/warrah>



Raising further funds for Bakery equipment online

Visit from Vegepod

Warrah had the pleasure of the Marketing Director of Vegepod come and visit Jacaranda and Tallowwood. He came to see how the two 'vegepod' garden beds are being used to cultivate health and wellbeing benefits, which has been particularly important for residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. A further 10 vegepods have been purchased and will be installed by the Senior Coordinator – Therapeutic Gardening with participants across Warrah houses in coming months.



Sam proudly showing the produce grown in the raised garden beds to the Vegepod Staff

Gift in Wills Program

The Community Development team is developing a Gifts in Will (GIW) program for Warrah. GIW has not been a focus in Warrah's fundraising approach to date. It is a significant avenue for fundraising, with around 15-18% of annual revenue for charities coming from GIW donors.

Gift in Wills are a lasting legacy, enabling Warrah to continue its mission, ensuring a life of meaning, purpose and dignity for individuals with a disability. Warrah family members and supporters will receive a letter and supporting information about leaving a gift. Community Development staff are available to answer any questions or for a confidential chat about leaving a bequest.

Cindy Cunningham

Community Development Manager

Autumn

The leaves they fall so softly
Shadows fade away
Years they pass so quickly
And so it is this way

Vic Martin



Warrah Farm

It has been the polar opposite this summer season, compared to last year. With drought and fires being our biggest challenge last summer, to what seemed to be never ending wet cool days this season. It was frustrating to have worked so hard to watch the rain flush away the crops, but there wasn't time to dwell on such things. We shifted our focus to replant and recover. The crops which are usually thriving at this time, are slowly growing back, to what normally is our busiest time harvesting.

Since the rain, the last of the summer successions have been planted, including zucchini, cucumber, tomatoes, basil and beans. The usual salad mix, parsley, kale and chard are also in the ground, as well as beets and carrots. During late summer, we also began the process of planting the cooler season varieties including; cabbage, broccoli and leeks.

During the summer season we have had Rose from the Northern Rivers help around the farm. It's always great to get to know other people who are interested in learning more about where their food comes from, and how different crops are managed and grown. Rose took a liking to the tomato tunnels, which have done better than last season, as the tomato vine almost appears to grow before your eyes. Being from further north, Rose was more acclimatized to the warm conditions the tunnels capture, which she and the tomatoes love!

The biggest star of the season for the farm has been the sunflowers! As they opened, the mood and energy of the farm shifted, creating more positive vibes and an optimistic outlook for autumn ahead. As well as attracting bees from the area to pollinate the surrounding crops, the cockatoos got a good feed, and



Beautiful sunflowers on the farm



Delicious Zucchini flowers growing on the farm

the Warrah participants, from Community Support Services and the school, came to pick some to brighten their day.

It is commonly known that sunflowers follow the sun as it passes through the sky. This has made the sunflower a symbol of loyalty to many, as no matter how much light there is during the day, they stand tall and track the sun. After losing so many of our crops to the weather effects of La Niña, the flowers reminded me to keep my head up, and keep looking forward to what is coming.

Farming isn't always about the accomplishments we see in front of us now, but sometimes an arduous journey which only reminds us of our past successes.

The farm team is back on track with crops in the ground, and with a positive outlook for the autumn season to come. We look forward to continuing to deliver the best produce we can.

Cameron Quilty
Farm Manager

Autumn Produce in Shop

Greens:

Cos Lettuce, Coriander, Basil, Black Kale, Curly Kale, Parsley, Rocket, Baby Spinach, Salad Mix, Silverbeet.

Vegetables:

Green Beans, Beetroot, Broccoli, Broccolini, Green Capsicum, Red Capsicum, Carrots, Green Chilli, Lebanese Cucumber, Corn, Daikon, Eggplant, Fennel, Garlic, Ginger, Leek, Mushrooms, Brown Onions, Red Onions, Spring Onions, Snow Peas, Dutch Cream Potato, Pontiac Potato, Sebago Potato, Sweet Potato, Butternut Pumpkin, Jap Pumpkin, Radish, Sprouts, Cherry Tomatoes, Gourmet Tomatoes, Roma Tomatoes, Turmeric, Zucchini.

Fruits:

Fuji Apples, Grapes, Granny Smith Apple, Royal Gala Apples, Nashi Pears, Hass Avocados, Cavendish Bananas, Lady Finger Bananas, Lemons, Limes, Nectarines, Valencia Oranges, Passionfruit, Peaches, Pineapples, Plums, Quince, Strawberries, Watermelon.



Warrah Farm Enterprises

After all the intensity of last year, late summer has seemed a lot cooler, calmer and more measured here at the Farm Shop. That is not to say that the season hasn't been without excitement and challenges too though! We have worked hard on all the usual things and on pushing our bakery program to the next level, but also had some time and headspace to take stock (literally and figuratively), to tackle some maintenance, to strategise for the coming year and to regroup.

In addition to all the extra interest in organic food and welcoming customers who just never managed to go on holiday as they had planned, the run-up to Christmas also saw us serving over 200 Warrah staff members shopping with their gift vouchers. It was a pleasure to see everyone in our staff community after a year with so little contact across the organisation.

Closing the shop for 2½ weeks was a welcome relief for the team. While Borja went off to become a dad for the second time, the rest of us simply rested. Congratulations to Borja and his family on the arrival of their perfect baby girl!

In November we finally managed to welcome members of the public on site for the long-awaited hands-on course on backyard veggie growing. We ran a repeat of Workshop 1 at the end of January too. The groups lapped up all the wisdom they could from Rob Greatholder. Workshop 2 of the 4 part series delivered in February, facilitated by both Cameron and Rob.

The bakery is our major growth focus for Autumn. Customers fell in love with the bread produced during our training process with Farm Shop staff, support staff and Warrah participants last year. We currently have two weekly programs running with Campbell, Ben and Fawaaz. At the time of writing we have had our first three consecutive days of baking, providing 120 loaves for sale in the Farm Shop. We have most of the equipment in place now, along with reliable suppliers for the ingredients. The range includes heritage, country white, wholemeal and rye & caraway loaves. Now the focus will shift to expanding the customer base with standing orders from shop and delivery hub customers, as well as local cafes and restaurants.

The team has remained relatively consistent and stable. Emily joined us as a casual in December, and has fallen in with the team very easily – serving customers and making deliveries. Alyssa has left us recently after being offered a position closer to home. We will miss her



Freshly baked Warrah Artisan Bread

confident, easy-going manner - so welcome in a space that can get rather frenetic at times! The Farm and Shop crew has also welcomed the arrival of Maggie White, in her management role across the broader team. Her hands-on approach and insights into our operations and strategic direction are already providing a lovely energy and sense of direction on our end of the campus.

In terms of produce, this has been an especially challenging year for Australian farmers. The increased demand for organic produce (due to more home cooking, less travel and a heightened interest in building immunity), placed the relatively small organic segment of the agricultural industry under enormous pressure. Lack of seed stock, pressure to replant, logistical challenges at state borders, staff shortages and increased demand have all affected the availability, quality and price of produce. Add to this the effects of La Niña. One really has to be thankful every day for farmers who don't give up when they have drought one summer, and too much rain and not enough sunshine the next!

February has seen up to four Warrah Society programs running in and around the Farm shed, bakery and shop at any one time. Having teams baking bread, bagging salad mix, weighing fruit and vegetables, loading and making deliveries, writing labels for dry goods, shopping for a shared lunch, and tending to the chickens all at once is the reason the Farm Shop team gets out of bed in the morning. What a joy to be fully back in the swing of things!

The Farm Shop Team

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR FARM SHOP E-NEWSLETTER

Email farmshop@warrahfarmshop.org.au
Or subscribe via our website:
www.warrahfarmshop.org.au

WARRAH

LIVING LEARNING GROWING

Faces of Warrah 2021

