



Crows Nest
Centre

Connecting Our Community

Strategic Directions 2020-2025

North Sydney Community Service Ltd

About us

Since 1972 North Sydney Community Service Ltd, trading as Crows Nest Centre, has supported the residents of North Sydney and surrounding areas.

Located in the heart of Crows Nest's shopping precinct, we are a not-for-profit organisation and registered charity.



All our services and activities are designed to enhance quality of life and build a sense of community, especially among those who could be isolated or at risk in any way such as older people, people with a disability, migrants, parents and people who are homeless.

We are supported by Commonwealth, State and Local Government, as well as local schools, churches, businesses, service clubs, individuals and other agencies.



Since the Centre's inception we have operated under a Joint Strategic Plan with North Sydney Council delivering services from our Council owned community centre.

Our vision

A connected community.

Our mission

Crows Nest Centre exists to provide and facilitate quality community programs and services to:

- enhance the quality of life of individuals
- reduce social isolation and
- sustain community wellbeing

Our values

Work of the Crows Nest Centre is guided by our values:

- Caring
- Inclusive
- Effective
- Ethical



Our operating model

Our Centre works with older people, people with a disability, parents, migrants and people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, many of whom are socially isolated. We aim to make an impact for individuals, groups and the community.

We seek to improve our clients' quality of life by:

- Offering practical in-home and centre based services and activities
- Supporting life transitions
- Creating opportunities for people to utilise and contribute their skills
- Fostering creative expression
- Encouraging lifelong learning
- Promoting a sense of fun and enjoyment of life.

By connecting people through the Centre's group activities, community programs and networks, we help to reduce isolation and loneliness.



Every day, in all that we do, the Crows Nest Centre strives to create a sense of community wellbeing, in our local community and further afield, contributing to our vision of a more connected community.



Our operating principles

Our service delivery is based on:

- The right of people to maintain independence and make choices about their own lives
- The right of people to dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality
- The right of people to be valued as individuals
- The right of people to access service on a non-discriminatory basis and
- The right of the community to receive accountable and responsive service.

Our external environment

Ageing and disability

With one in five North Sydney residents aged 60+, ageing and disability continues to be at the heart of the Crows Nest Centre's services and activities.

Experience shows that early retirees are more interested in healthy ageing activities or contributing as a volunteer, while people aged 75 and over often seek help to remain independent in their own home.

Over the last decade, the Centre has been impacted by continuing aged care reform as well as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Changes to the ageing and disability sectors

continue apace. The current Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety is due to report in February 2021.

The Royal Commission will likely recommend changes to aged care funding, giving older Australians greater control in the purchase of services in a more regulated and accountable system.



For some years, the Australian Government has been interested in consolidating Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) services and Home Care Packages, but clarity about how best to achieve this has proved elusive. The 2020-21 Federal Budget allocated \$4.6m to “development of a single in-home support program for older people at home”, without providing any detail.



Our Centre’s current CHSP funding is assured to 30 June 2022. As yet the implications are unclear, but combined with recommendations from the Aged Care Royal Commission, the outcomes for the Centre are likely to be significant.

Notably, the World Health Organisation has declared 2020-30 the ‘Decade of Healthy Ageing’. In response, we hope to see increased Government support for healthy ageing initiatives .

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse and Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability is due to report in April 2022. Our Centre previously chose not to register as a NDIS provider, however a small number of people with a disability, most of whom fall outside the scope of the NDIS, have chosen to continue to access our services and activities.

Migrants

Cultural diversity is increasing in North Sydney. Twenty-two percent of North Sydney residents speak a language other than English at home (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016). The main languages they speak at home include Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese, Spanish, French and Hindi.

Our Centre has been granted funding (2019 to 2021) through the Australian Government's Mutual Understanding, Support, Tolerance, Engagement and Respect (MUSTER) initiative, allowing us to bolster our migrant service activities. Regrettably, this funding is strictly time limited, with no prospect of renewal.

Having previously experienced the withdrawal of migrant services funding, we rely heavily on volunteers to deliver our migrant services. Consequently, we aim to target our migrant service delivery to programs we can sustain when the current MUSTER funding expires at the end of 2020/21.



Parents

North Sydney is an increasingly attractive area for families seeking accommodation close to employment, services, facilities, education and entertainment. The *North Sydney Family and Children's Services Strategy* (2018) draws on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) identifying that between 2011 and 2016 the number of North Sydney households with children increased by 1,352 including 1,090 coupled households with children under 15 years.



Over that period an additional 492 children aged 0-4 years and a further 895 children aged 5-11 years were living in the area. The Strategy identified an increasing willingness of families to live in high rise apartments contributing to this trend. Given the high numbers of apartments developed in the locality over the past five years, it is expected that the 2021 census will reveal a further increase in the number of children and families residing in our local community.

Homeless or at risk

North Sydney Council's Homelessness Strategy (2013) recognises growth in the number of people who are homeless or at risk seeking support, many of whom are also dealing with concurrent difficulties such as poor physical or mental health, drug and alcohol issues, or interaction with the criminal justice system.

Limited affordable local housing makes it very difficult for people who are homeless or at risk to access suitable accommodation leaving them poorly placed to address complex personal issues.

In July 2020, information prepared by id. the population experts, for North Sydney Council, identified that 4.2% of North Sydney's population were receiving COVID-19 JobSeeker payments. It is widely expected that the proposed substantial reduction of these payments from the end of March 2021 will lead to an increase in the number of people who are homeless or at risk in our local community.





Local development

The development of Crows Nest's Metro Station is well advanced with the new station expected to open in 2024.

Population and housing projections prepared for North Sydney Council by .id the population experts in 2017 forecast that between 2016 and 2036, the estimated resident population of Crows Nest St Leonards is expected to grow by 57% to a total of 11,392 people (at an annual average increase of 2.29%). Over the same time, the forecast for population growth across the North Sydney Local Government Area is 17% to a total of 84,422 people.

These changing demographics are reflected in the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's *St Leonards and Crows Nest 2036 Plan* (August 2020).





It proposes urban renewal of St Leonards and Crows Nest, with an expanded employment centre (63,500 jobs in St Leonards by 2036) and a growing residential community across St Leonards, Greenwich, Naremburn, Wollstonecraft, Crows Nest and Artarmon with 6,683 new homes added by 2036.

The St Leonards Crows Nest Plan also responds to community requests for more open space by proposing the use of developer contributions to create a new park with underground parking on the site of the existing Holtermann Street carpark, adjoining our Centre. The demolition and construction phase of this project will present some challenges for our Centre.

Our planning process

In August 2020 we held a workshop with clients, staff, volunteers and North Sydney Council representatives to:

- Reflect on hopes and dreams for the Centre and our community
- Consider national public policy and practice in the aged care sector
- Review local demographics
- Recognise our role in supporting North Sydney Council to fulfil its *Delivery Program* and associated Strategies including:
 - *Older Persons Strategy*
 - *Disability Inclusion Action Plan*
 - *Family and Children's Services Strategy*
 - *Homelessness Strategy*
 - *Crows Nest Centre Joint Plan of Management*



- Listen to clients and volunteers views about the value, purpose and possibilities for our Centre
- Claim and reaffirm:
 - Our values
 - What we do and for whom
 - Our strengths and contribution to achieving our vision of a connected community
- Review achievements against *Our Strategic Directions 2017-2020* and prioritise future action



Our strengths and assets

Stakeholders attending our planning day (August 2020) identified that the Crows Nest Centre stands out for the way we:

- Accept and welcome people
- Encourage a diversity of cultures
- Create community wellbeing
- Are strongly committed to excellence and
- Are environmentally aware and sustainable

Our stakeholders also identified assets as:

- Committed and dedicated volunteers
- Staff who are skilled, caring and cohesive
- Board engagement with diverse perspectives
- Quality facilities that enable venue hire income to support our community services
- Long standing partnership with North Sydney Council
- Community partnerships with local schools, churches, service clubs and businesses

All these strengths and assets will be drawn upon to undertake the Strategic Initiatives our planning process identified.



Our strategic initiatives

We are keen to expand upon the initiatives identified in *Our Strategic Directions 2017-2020* by:

- Building on existing (and developing new) strategic alliances
- Preparing and positioning for ageing and disability reform
- Continuing service development, quality review and evaluation
- Uplifting brand and marketing
- Diversifying funding sources
- Recognising and supporting our volunteers and staff

