

History of HCSG

HCSG has a commitment to an ongoing conscious involvement within the Mundaring Shire (expanded to the Eastern Metropolitan Region in 2000). In broad terms HCSG acts as an umbrella organisation within the Eastern Metropolitan Region and accepts funding for programs which provide services to target groups compatible with the objectives of HCSG.

The impetus for the development of the Group came from the findings of:

- a candidate in the local Shire elections, who found a number of people in need of support of various kinds.
- an awareness of community needs through involvement in the local recreation centre - ie handicap programs and a senior social afternoon.

Early Beginnings

A Public Meeting was called on the 12th July, 1983 at Brown Park Community Centre, Swan View. The guest speakers were representatives from Volunteer Task Force, Northam Care and Share, Swan Caring, Swan Districts Hospital Social Worker and local politicians Gavan Troy and Gordon Hill. The Mundaring Shire handled the publicity as requested by Councillor Ron Dullard. Notice of the Public Meeting was sent home on all school newsletters, to churches, service organisations and newspapers in the area. On a cold, wet night ninety-two people attended the meeting where they were told by the speakers how their groups functioned and the need they felt existed in all areas. It was agreed to hold a further meeting a fortnight later in the Shire Offices for those interested in becoming involved in establishing a support group in the Mundaring Shire. This meeting was held on the 26th July, and attended by seventy people.

Cr Ron Dullard ran the meeting until Stephen Dellar indicated his willingness to be involved and was asked to be Chairman of the Group. The name of "Hills Community Support Group" was agreed upon. The Mundaring Shire offered support through payment of a telephone, donation of a desk and typewriter and establishment grant of \$250. A corner in the foyer of Brown Park Recreation Centre in Swan View was offered for use by the Group. The 'office' opened on the 1st August 1983. Donations of paper, printing etc were made by various members. The logo "A Conscious Involvement" and hands reaching out in support were devised by Ron and Helen Dullard. Stuart Lee of Darlington portrayed Michaelangelo's hands from the Sistine Chapel for his final design of the logo.

The executive structure of the Group began with a President (Stephen Dellar), Secretary (Jopie Peetoom), Treasurer (Joy Baker) and Office Coordinator (Helen Dullard). Each townsite had its own Coordinator who was responsible for contact of any kind, for delivery of newsletters and for collection of donations received. Initially, due to lack of funds, no petrol reimbursement was possible. After twelve months, 10 cents per kilometre was paid and after three years, 15 cents per kilometre. A reimbursement of 40 cents per kilometre is paid now and volunteers are encouraged to claim the reimbursement as this is vital for statistical records. There was no regular source of income of any kind to any volunteers for the first three years of operation.

Initial Funding

A one-off grant of \$3,000 was received for transport costs and an establishment grant of \$850 was received from the Department of Community Services. Passengers were told that volunteers receive reimbursement and a donation was suggested, but not required. Receipts were given. The Group was registered as a Charitable organisation. Fundraising was done by

the Group in a moderate fashion. Rotary and Lions gave an initial donation. The Lotteries Commission funded a nine seater bus and a wheelchair.

By September 1986 there were 160 members who registered almost 3,000 jobs per annum. There were seventy volunteers with a further twenty passive supporters for fundraising, etc. By 1988 there were 400 members, 110 volunteers with over 7,000 jobs per annum being undertaken. Petrol reimbursement to volunteers amounted to over \$7,500 per annum. By 1993 the annual petrol reimbursement was in excess of \$14,000.

Community Scope

By coincidence, 1983 was the year the Red Cross decided to no longer offer services as far afield as Mundaring and outer areas. Some Red Cross drivers did not join the Group because no reimbursement was guaranteed. Others, especially from Mundaring, moved automatically over to the HCSG.

The Group began by offering transport to Doctor's surgeries, hospitals, shopping and a monthly pensioner's afternoon. Before expanding into other areas, HCSG obtained funding from the Community Employment Program for a Community Needs Survey and commissioned Jopie Peetoom. The study identified needs for Youth, Aged, Unemployed and people with disabilities, plus the inadequacy of transport services within the Mundaring Shire.

Extended Care in the Day Care facility at Swan District Hospital was opened in 1983 and enquiries were made to the Group to begin offering a Day Centre Service. The first Day Centre was opened in March, 1985 and coordinated by Laurel Hartnell in a pre-fab Shire building at Bentley Park in Stoneville. In March 1986 the Day Centre moved to a specially built extension at the Senior Citizens building in Mundaring. Funding was apportioned through \$20,000 from the Health Department, \$11,000 from Senior Citizens and \$10,000 from Mundaring Shire. The Day Centre opened two days per week and in July 1987 began operating three days a week. Day Centres in 2003 operate nine days per week with three Mobile Day Centres, a Library Reading Group, a Men's Group and two Dementia Specific groups.

By 1986 the Group had become fully recognised in the community. Referrals came from doctors, Silver Chain, Shire employees and Government Agencies. Due to Shire Support, in May 1986, the Group was able to move into an office in Nichol House, Mundaring. The growing workload caused the executive of the Group to apply to the Health Department, Home and Community Care (HACC) for funds to employ a Coordinator and a part-time Secretary. This was approved and began in March 1987. The positions were advertised with Helen Dullard appointed Coordinator and Valerie Adnams, Secretary.

Youth Services

To establish permanent support for the Youth of the Shire, funds were sought through the Community Employment Program. An amount of \$19,187 was received to employ a Youth Project Officer for nine months. This funding was reapplied for from the Department of Community Development and an amount of \$18,565 was approved and the service began in April 1988. The service has grown and now has funding for one and a half workers, plus \$9,000 per annum Mundaring Shire support in a hall at Brown Park. It is now officially recognised as the Swan View Youth Centre.

In 1995 the Shire of Mundaring undertook a long term commitment to fund youth services in central Mundaring and the Shires' eastern townsites. By 1996/97 an amount of \$30,000 was tendered out to the Group to expand the services "up the hill" as an extension of the Swan View Youth Centre. The Hills Youth Centre enjoyed a collaborative relationship with Eastern Hills and Helena College High Schools and the Mundaring Arts Centre. Youth Services initiated

activities for young people with intellectual disabilities with the aim of integration into mainstream youth services, music workshops, urban art programs, and other opportunities.

To support the need of the mature unemployed in the community, funding from the Department of Employment and Training was sought. A Job Finding Club was run for three weeks in October 1987 to develop job finding skills and to provide work experience opportunities. Eight out of eleven participants successfully found employment or work experience.

HACC Growth

A second funding application was made to the HACC in 1987. The Day Centre was growing, the office space was no longer adequate and generally the services were being hampered by unsatisfactory working conditions. HACC could not agree to Capital Funding so a suitable house was chosen by the HCSG and bought by the Shire in November 1987 (an indication of the development of the Shire's involvement in supporting needed community facilities).

The house, at 2 Craig Street, Mundaring was bought and a renovation grant of \$65,000 was sought and received from the Lotteries Commission. The building was called 'Wahroonga', aboriginal for 'Our Home'. It housed administration, Day Centre and facilitated many self-help groups of diverse backgrounds. In May 1988 further HACC funding was received to consolidate respite care through centre based and in-home support. Day Centre services no longer operated from the Senior Citizens Centre.

Funding was also received to purchase a 22 seater bus with an hydraulic lift for wheelchair access. As at March 2003 HCSG has thirty-six vehicles to meet service provision demands.

On 16th July 1988 "Wahroonga" was officially opened by Dr Russell Waugh, Shire President in conjunction with Max Williams, Mundaring Shire General Manager.

Increased HACC funding ensured the provision of Home Help and Handyman services. Additional Day Centres were established in Mt Helena and Swan View, and now Koongamia. Personal Care Services ensure residents can access assistance with showering, dressing and all related support for personal mobility. To complement this development, HCSG successfully negotiated Landlord responsibilities of the Shire facility at 20 Chidlow Street, Mt Helena. This old school facility was renovated through HCSG fundraising and is known as "Milperra", aboriginal for 'company'. This cottage is home to Centre-based Respite, Support Group gatherings for people with psychiatric illness and anyone else who would like to enjoy 'away from home respite' or a weekend holiday with Support Workers. "Milperra" offers an excellent opportunity for consumers to negotiate a "stay", totally designed around personal needs and capabilities. Department of Health and Ageing funding enables 24 hour Crisis Respite support.

Community Aged Care Packages

Initially, fifteen packages provided options for Hostel-level residents in Mundaring to receive the necessary care to allow them to remain in their own homes. A further twenty-five packages were funded in 1998 to service Kalamunda Shire residents, with a further forty-five funded in 2001. This is known as the Gesundheit Program.

Services for People with an Intellectual Disability

Disability Services Commission funding provides an Accommodation Support Program and a Community Living Program for a number of people with an intellectual disability with medium to high support needs. They receive support through individual care plans or through 24 hour

daily support. By 1997/98 three houses provided residential community living for twelve people with intellectual disabilities. In 2002, expansion plans were negotiated.

People with disabilities having difficulty accessing community activities due to non-acceptance, age, and other factors lead to the formation of the "Open Option" Program. This was the brainchild of staff members, and identified a broad sector issue - "Where do aged people with an intellectual disability, with the onset of dementia, etc, fit in the funding area". Gordon Reid funding, followed by HACC funding, enabled an innovative program to be developed. Families also receive support through the development of an Individual Options Program.

Community Merger

During 1997, a local "Leisure Buddy Program" for people with disabilities, approached HCSG to take over this service. From 1st July 1997, this became the Leisure Focus Program which included a small amount of Individual Options funding.

Post School Options

In 1998 HCSG became a provider of "Post School Options", an alternative to work service for school leavers with disabilities. Young people enjoy activities that give huge opportunities for personal development, friendships and fun.

People with Mental Health Issues

The Swan Health Service, in conjunction with Homeswest, approached HCSG to become involved in supporting people with psychiatric disabilities to live in the community. Department of Health Mental Health Division funding enables Landlord assistance and support for daily living responsibilities. Rainbow was one of the first HCSG programs to extend from Mundaring Shire to cover the Eastern Region within the areas of Wooroloo, Kalamunda, Bullsbrook and Bayswater. In 2002, Rainbow expanded the Independent Living Program into Northam.

Seniors Services

1997 saw the implementation of two further services for "Seniors" in the community. The 'Get Away Club' was formed for 'well' seniors who wish to access a range of cultural, health, educational, and recreational opportunities.

Yallambee Village residents engaged HCSG to manage their ongoing support needs plus some advocacy representation. This works well and has been a factor for new residents considering moving into the village.

Further Growth

The period from 1998 to 2003 saw a number of significant developments in response to external funding trends and the need for infrastructure growth. As management responsibilities in Occupational Safety and Health, Risk Management, and general industrial issues grew, a Resource Services Officer was appointed. A Project Officer was appointed to develop a strong Staff Professional Development program and to support the ongoing implementation of Quality Assurance practices. The Project Officer will work towards achieving Accredited Assessor qualification to ensure objective and comprehensive assessments are available to all HCSG consumers.

Leased office space at the Business Enterprise Centre became inadequate and instigated the idea to purchase office space in Midland which was close to public transport and could accommodate a more central contact point for regional programs. The purchase of Units 1 and 5, Hamilton House, 14 Stafford Street, Midland took place in July 1999 and was officially opened by Lloyd Stewart, Lotteries Commission Board Chairperson on 1st December. The building was purchased through a \$100,000 Lotteries grant and a loan of \$150,000 to be repaid by the HCSG over 15 years. Leisure Focus, Get Away Club, Gesundheit, Rainbow, Youth and Work for Dole programs operate from Hamilton House.

Corporate Partnership

A further significant development was the establishment of a partnership with Midland Brick Company Pty Ltd. Midland Brick contributed two houses for specific uses. It also purchased a brick-firing kiln and enthusiastically supported the development of a brick carving “business” as a potential fundraising exercise for HCSG-Enterprise East program.

The alliance is forged on mutual respect for each party’s skills and networks with the potential to develop broadbased regional initiatives to enhance support services and training and employment opportunities for young people who experience barriers to employment.

A further initiative of the Partnership was the decision to build a second Respite Centre in Koongamia. The Centre was to address the “homelessness” of the Swan View respite group and also the growing pressure on the Mundaring Respite Centre. Ministry of Housing donated the block, with Mundaring Shire contributing \$20,000. The respite Centre benefited from the generosity of Midland Brick funding the Building Supervisor and providing materials at cost. Trish Macey offered to be Development Officer and set a goal to raise \$100,000. Due to the introduction of GST, business donations were hard to get. HACC and Lotteries funded \$167,000 with significant donors contributing a further \$75,000. Fundraising became a high priority and raised a further \$70,000. It was a massive undertaking, but very worthwhile. The centre was named Centenary House and was completed in December 2000. It was opened by Minister for Housing and Works, Tom Stephens in May 2001.

The Midland Brick and HCSG partnership was a finalist in the State Community Services Industry Awards 2000. In 2002 the partnership was a State winner and a Nationalist Finalist in the Prime Minister’s Award for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships.

HCSG and BizLynx Technology have cemented a partnership through a ‘Memorandum of Understanding’. BizLynx Information Communication Technology expertise will value-add to HCSG ongoing IT development.

Capital Growth

- Through Lotterywest funding of \$590,000 HCSG entered into a ‘Deed of Trust’ with Lotterywest for the purchase of Pinewood Function Centre, a eight hundred square metre building on 10,000 square metres of land. This significant purchase will provide opportunities to a greater number of families looking for services for people with disabilities. Kalamunda HACC and Care Packages (Gesundheit) administration will operate from Pinewood, creating financial efficiencies through rental savings from the Lesmurdie office. HCSG see Pinewood providing opportunity to become a valued community member in the Kalamunda Shire through the sharing of this facility with local groups.
- Enterprise House – Midland Brick has made available to HCSG a school property of over 800 square metres on 24,000 square metres of land for use by Enterprise East and

other related “youth at risk” programs. This venue is user friendly for the target group and encourages involvement in personal development and work experience opportunities.

Funding Growth

- National Respite for Carers Program reviewed nationally the direction of Respite provision and Carers support. All services were put out for re-tender. HCSG was successful in more than doubling its funding over three years, which meant an amount of \$143,000 for the 2005/06 Financial year. Stronger alliances with Red Cross Respite and Carers WA have been the result.
- National Community Crime Prevention Program funding of \$331,000 over two years was received for an Intervention & Diversion project aims to build on and strengthen community capacity to develop a collegiate approach to working with young people on criminal pathways.
- HACC funding growth has enabled HCSG to establish an Aboriginal “Day Centre”, eventually to be complemented by an outreach service to local town dwellers. **OUTC**
- Mental Health funding Agreement increased by \$28,000 for Property Management and \$14,000 for Psychological Support.

REGIONAL CONSOLIDATION

The growth and development of HCSG during the period 1998 – 2003 was in direct response to external factors, changing funding trends, and the implementation by Government of competitive tendering. HCSG recognised the necessity to look at viability threats and to assess the risks of not having the resources to ensure appropriate infrastructure expertise. The wisdom of being bound by a narrow geographical catchment area was questioned, and the decision was made to tender for Community Care Packages in Kalamunda. The Board approved the Eastern Metropolitan Region as the area in which HCSG would become a key provider.

This regional approach led to a significant increase in the number of Aged Care Packages to be provided by HCSG, 85 in Swan, Mundaring and Kalamunda Shires. This success recognised HCSG’s high standard of care in the community. In 2003 a further fifteen packages were secured, totalling one hundred packages across three Shires.

HCSG

In recognition of servicing an area far broader than “the hills” and of having become much more than a “Group”, it was considered more appropriate to promote the initials “HCSG” in place of ‘Hills Community Support Group’.

PROGRAM GROWTH

The **Rainbow Program** expanded with the provision of Carer respite through obtaining Preferred Provider Status with Mental Health Division and an additional \$70,000 recurrent funding. This significant development has enabled the Rainbow Program to work from a holistic approach with families. The increased funding also consolidated a team of professionally trained staff in mental health issues.

Opportunities for more diverse services for people with disabilities and their Carers were made possible through accessing Respite funding from Disability Services Commission (DSC). The **Leisure Focus Program** moved to include working with high support needs people to give their Carers some relief from the caring role.

Post School Options continues to attract new families. Midland Brick made a house available to develop a “studio” outlet to complement the Open Options program at Centenary House. Parental update and interest in the high standard of program management and “one on one” model is welcomed by the program.

The **Community Living Program** has successfully negotiated with Department of Housing and Works to replace Nobel House with a more appropriately designed house to meet residents’ needs. Once again, family contributions have ensured a high quality facility. Expansion negotiations for a further twelve residents to join HCSG are under way. A two and a quarter acre site in Parkerville will offer an excellent environment for individual circumstances and to plan for ageing in place facilities.

The **HCSG-Enterprise East** initiative has consolidated, with a work-team managing garden maintenance contracts. A Business Development Leader position was funded for two years by Department of Education and Training (DET) and “HCSG-Enterprise East” officially registered as a business. A five year lease agreement with Midland Brick for the business base at 67 Great Northern Highway, Middle Swan, was a significant factor in obtaining a Lotteries grant of \$36,000 to develop the base for ongoing work experience and training. HCSG-Enterprise East has put HCSG at the forefront of Business Partnership success, winning Midland Brick the DSC “Making a Difference” Award and being profiled at a DET Workshop and a Lotteries Business and Community Luncheon.

Carers were targeted for special attention during 2001. Two additional Carer Support and Information Groups were formed. A Coordinator position was established in 2002. By 2004 a “Carers Cottage” had been established, and partnerships negotiated with Carers WA.

HCSG developed its website through internal expertise and in 2001 linked readily to the Shire of Mundaring and City of Swan websites. A dedicated Information Technology position was created to manage and support IT development. A successful Lotteries submission for \$245,000 linked four HCSG sites through utilisation of the latest ADSL and VPN technology, which lead to increased efficiencies in rostering, staff management, and consumer services.

Additional **HACC funding** was again received. In 2004, HACC funding totalled \$1,253,580 million.

The “Holistic” approach HCSG uses when working with people was influential in the appointment of an Individual Options Coordinator. People with disabilities are able to use their own funding to purchase from a smorgasbord of services, either through HCSG or other relevant options in the broader community.

Midland Base Expansion

Unit 2 at Hamilton House, 14 Stafford Street, Midland was purchased to complement Units 1 and 5, and to create space to accommodate growing Carer, family and consumer interaction. A self-supporting loan of \$130,000 was secured through the City of Swan. Hamilton House has become the “hub” of Regional Development initiatives. An Office Co-Ordinator position was created in 2004.

Lesmurdie Office

In April 2004, a twelve month lease was secured on office space in Grove Road, Lesmurdie. HACC and Gesundheit staff working and living in Kalamunda Shire were pleased to have a local base for administration, training and support. Almost immediately there was a united approach amongst Kalamunda-based agencies to provide services to frail older people and people with disabilities.

Mundaring Office – “Wahroonga”

This office is the Administrative hub of HCSG, base for financial management, HACC coordination and the Community Living Program.

General

- On 12th July 2003 HCSG celebrated twenty years of service. It was a year of celebration with excellent participation from consumers, staff, Volunteers, and past members. A Volunteer banner recorded 475 names and a History, “Next of Kin” by Lyla Elliot, recorded the growth and development of the organisation. A celebration dinner was held for up to one hundred Volunteers.
- The HCSG infrastructure has been strengthened through the creation of a Human Resource position. There are now thirteen Manager positions, ably supported by twenty-one Co-Ordinator positions.
- HCSG continues to aim to secure the financial resources, staff expertise, and skilled management necessary to provide a high standard of services and accountability to the community and to funding bodies.

Growth and Development 2005

Corporate Partnerships

The HCSG – Midland Brick partnership was the State winner in the Prime Ministers Awards for Excellence in the Large Business Category. The partnership went on to become a National Winner in the Longevity Category of Large Business Partnerships. The partnership was profiled in the Philanthropy Australia Summer/Autumn 2004 edition.

Swan Chamber of Commerce has committed to developing a Social Conscience portfolio with HCSG. This result is an outcome of the Midland Brick partnership.

Rainbow Program Award

This program was the National winner of the “Award for Excellence for Service to Tenants and Communities”. This was a significant recognition of the high quality care and individual planning that takes place for tenants of the Rainbow program.

Strategic Plan 2005-08

Through Optimise International, HCSG underwent a rigorous review and strategic planning exercise which had a focus on identifying HCSG’s strengths, opportunities and challenges which could be worked with to achieve at least a further twenty years of quality operation. Input was highly inclusive and included consumers, volunteers, staff, community members and funding bodies.

The future looks exciting through a re-structure which allows involvement from a greater number of Managers and Co-Ordinators, supported by Business Improvement Projects (BIPs) for specific projects. Financial responsibility and management is to be “pushed down” to program level.

HCSG aims to continue to be a strong, focussed key provider in the Eastern Metropolitan Region, conscious of its “Points of Difference” and keen to prioritise these for ongoing Consumer and family benefit.

Growth and Development 2006

It is exciting to witness the implementation of a successful Strategic Plan, to see it driving change, stimulating creative thinking, and challenging a greater number of people to come on board and “own” the future of HCSG.

Restructure of key service areas

To ensure a seamless access to services by consumers, all Aged Care Services (HACC, VHC, CACPs, NRCP) were brought together under the one manager. Staff resources, communications, training and career pathways will be enhanced and the sharing of initiatives will bring new options for consumers.

Similarly, all disability programs (Supported Accommodation, Alternatives to Employment, Leisure Focus, Accommodation Support, Individual Options) were brought under the one manager, ensuring greater staff appreciation of individual program challenges and building a collaborative team approach to external work-force issues.

The restructure created an “Organisational Development” and two “Special Projects” positions. A Property Manager was appointed in July, 2006.

Program Growth

Work Options: After seven years of supported work opportunities for participants, Work Options recognised it could not secure recurrent social support funding to enhance employment sustainability. Work Options moved under the umbrella of Workpower who, as an employment agency can more successfully attract social support funding. The Work Options program kept people with mental health issues well and out of hospital for up to five year intervals.

HACC: HACC funding grew to \$1,592,598 and took over Mundaring Meals on Wheels delivery and management, and the local podiatry service for seniors. An Aboriginal day centre has had unique success due to a determination by HCSG to recognise cultural differences and to operate within a genuine consultative framework. This program's success is creating statewide interest.

Growth funding will be sought for HACC services in Kalamunda. Centre-based funding will not be sought for Kalamunda.

Identification & Diversion (ID) Project: In 2004, HCSG received funding from the Australian Government to establish the Intervention and Diversion Project related to young people and the reduction of crime and criminal pathways. In identifying and addressing the issues that lead young people into anti-social and criminal behaviours, it is seen as a priority within ID to support measures to minimise the impact of early school exiting and associated poor literacy and numeracy. The implementation of the Youth Advantage Strategy present very real challenges within the educational environment to develop strategies that will provide intensive practical and social supports to young people who have significant personal and family issues.

Rainbow: There are now 67 independent living units throughout the Swan Health Region including five in Northam. Employment outcomes have lead to significant personal achievements, with five tenants wishing to negotiate the purchase of their units.

HCSG is considering tendering for managing services in two community support rehabilitation units in the metropolitan area.

Special Achievement

An exciting outcome after years of searching for an Open Option premise was the Lotterywest purchase in 2005 of "Pinewood" for \$590,000. Pinewood was a thirty-five year old function centre in Maida Vale in picturesque, tranquil gardens, with 150 parking bays. The transfer of the Lesmurdie office and the termination of the "Hive" and "Windoo" rentals ensured a maintenance budget could be developed for Pinewood.

Open Options, Kalamunda HACC and Gesundheit management and a community room, are features of Pinewood. Open Options' new home, has meant activity growth and support for a greater number of young people with disabilities and their families. The parent involvement and contribution to events has trebled. Community groups, services organisations and small business are valuable contacts for Pinewood's place in the community.

Personal Support Program: The Australian Government "Personal Support Program" contract was renewed in January 2006 following a sector review of providers. A dedicated manager offers an intensive, individualised service to adults with severe personal issues. HCSG was pleased to be selected to continue as a preferred provider for this program.

General: Specific Project funding has been a feature of 2006 for HCSG, offering some unique opportunities for innovation in individualised respite, holidays, and regular support for Carers. National Respite funding for the Eastern Region will develop new regional networks, and families will explore packages of care that will give "that precious break". Families will "house swap" between Bunbury and Perth, and some parents will have their "first ever" holiday by the sea.

HCSG has a growing team of staff and volunteers who are consciously and actively involved in all aspects of the organisation. They are solution focussed and strongly committed to making a difference – it is this significant internal strength that will take HCSG forward.

Parkerville

After many years of negotiating and designing, an environmentally sound facility for twelve residents was designed and presented to Council in 2006 for planning approval. There was strong neighbour objection based on imagined fears and road issues which had little to do with design and planning issues. The facility did not have a smooth run through Council due to persistent neighbour objections.

Parkerville will be showcased as a demonstration model from a number of perspectives. There are three accommodation “pods”, each with significant personal space areas. The internal hub around meals and recreation allows maximum use of staff resources. Two night support staff will enable substantial “ageing in place” options. A federal water treatment grant will support HCSG’s environmentally sound principles. Recycling of grey and black water will contribute to protecting the hills water catchment areas. Solar technology will lead to financial efficiencies. The local Parkerville Primary School will extend the project through a Water Wise initiative which will monitor and develop a staged project from installation, orchard preparation, produce and “healthy eating” school projects. Environmental awareness will engender community inclusion and lead to unique partnerships.

Update of 2007

The Identification & Diversion (ID) Project did not receive ongoing Federal funding. Two significant projects that were an outcome were argued to be a State responsibility, despite the crucial need for overall project and development management. HCSG again found itself battling to sustain administrative and infrastructure support.

Project 1 Education Transition Pilot:

Education Transition is a two year pilot project funded by the Department for Education and Training. Education Transition works in collaboration with the Swan Participation Team to provide intensive support to at-risk young people, aged 16 and 17 years, and their families, to effect meaningful engagement and maintenance in education/training/employment. The project aims to build relationships of trust with young people assisting young people to address their barriers. The project is extremely successful, with over 21 young people engaged in positive outcomes.

Swan Alliance funding has been secured to develop local partnerships and opportunities for young people to get exposure to careers and employment options. Transition support for both the employer and young person will encourage a work-ready culture and assist with retention in education/training and employment.

Project 2 Safe House:

A Domestic Violence Committee identified the need for a Safe House for young women aged 14 to 18 years. Women’s Refuges in WA cannot accept this age group and there is no facility in the State for them to seek support. The ID project took the Midland Brick / HCSG partnership to the next level of significance to the local community.

Midland Brick identified three blocks of land in Middle Swan as a suitable site to build a Safe House. The Department of Housing & Works (DHW) were then prepared to commit to the building of the facility. Department of Child Protection committed interim operational funding for two years. An interim facility was purchased by DHW so the service could offer limited assistance while the main facility was being designed and built.

The Safe House is the first of its kind in WA. Young women from across the metropolitan area will be accepted and the relevant government agencies will work collaboratively to assist young people to break their cycle of domestic violence and to develop new networks.

The ID Project also initiated an Education Retention proposal around 12 to 15 year olds and the external supports required to maintain an ongoing education. Talks were held with Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council (EMRC) and the State Government about a joint venture. To date there has been no outcome.

Program Growth

Rainbow Program has 77 houses. A weekly Drop-In Centre was initiated by participants with them setting the direction and purpose of the centre. A partnership with the Anglican Church made this possible.

A successful HealthRight project was established, and extension of funding secured. Participants find this useful, not only for health matters, but for building new friendships.

Personal Support Program has continued to expand and now has 85 places. Centrelink referrals are promptly responded to and HCSG has a good track record of positive and sustainable individual outcomes.

Strategic Plan 2005-2008 This plan continued to stimulate creative thinking and open doors for new opportunities.

A Manager of Quality was appointed with responsibility for both Assurance and Improvement. This position provides HCSG with the capacity to participate in external quality pilot projects and to keep abreast of critical legislative obligations. The Carers Recognition Act has become a whole of organisation philosophy due to having this internal driver. Similarly, a “wellness” approach to service provision has successfully become a philosophical focus throughout HCSG.

Profile Raising

A Community Advisory Group was established as a strategy to engage with key stakeholders in the community. Those with a vested interest in HCSG’s service quality are asked to give feedback and suggestions on how to improve services.

This HCSG profile was supplemented with a concerted awareness raising year of community activities during 2008 “25th Anniversary” celebrations.

Profile raising was also enhanced through the development of the “Hills Connection”. This quarterly magazine is sponsored by local business and distributed to almost 2,000 consumers and their families. A donation slip is included, introducing for the first time, an invitation to families to donate to “special projects” that do not fit within existing funding contacts. The first project was a large shed to store donated second-hand furniture for distribution to those consumers who need “first start” assistance. \$16,000 was raised and a shed opening was held.

Respite Cottage – Endorsement of HCSG’s community profile reached a new height when a couple, Lara and Vince, bought a house and donated it, rent free, for respite for people with disabilities. Busy Bees saw the house transform into the perfect place to have a break away for Carers or the person they care for. The second-hand furniture shed fully furnished what has been named “Lara’s Cottage”. Lara has since become an HCSG Board Member.

Reflections

HCSG has reached its 25th year of operation during this time there has been much growth and diversity of funding. People in need have, from the beginning, set the direction HCSG has taken. There have been many achievements and a lot of challenges have been overcome. It has always been a priority for HCSG to remain with the community and to be part of it. To witness the Senior Citizens Centre transform into the “Hub of the Hills” and to be a significant player alongside the Shire of Mundaring symbolises our community development focus.

The HCSG identity and ethos is something we hang onto with great pride. We always say “the vast amount of government funding is only one means to an end, not an end in itself”. To capture our ethos and sense of purpose we had Lyla Elliott write our first history, the “Next of Kin” in 2003. The title was chosen from a consumer who, having no family, named HCSG on her hospital admission form as her “Next of Kin”. This history has been an invaluable tool in maintaining the organisation’s ethos. New Managers, Coordinators, House Supervisors and Board Members are given a copy as part of their introduction to HCSG.

The 25th Anniversary celebrations in 2008 added a further chapter covering five years of growth and development and a reprint of “Next of Kin” with extra chapters being written by Alice Nelson.