Improving your wellbeing
A consumer’s journey through the Farm therapeutic community residential service

“I have been an addict for 24 years.

Walking through the gates of the Farm, I was an angry, defiant, dishonest, sad, lonely and selfish man. I had so much guilt and shame. I was reckless and had no regard for anyone else, nor myself. I was a completely broken man, had lost my mother and was on the way to losing my life.

For the first three weeks here I didn't sleep much at all and I really struggled to cope. I honestly thought I would never be able to beat this demon of mine…addiction.

But then something happened. I decided to completely surrender myself to the Palmerston therapeutic community program. From that day on, something amazing happened. My life started to change. Using community as method in our daily groups, and the many one-on-one counselling sessions, I grew more than I ever have as a person. I finally got to explore deep within myself and get back to my core values that I lost so many years ago.

I have gained back broken relationships with my wife, my father, my sister, her husband and son. It’s amazing to have those connections back, and I’m sure my mum is looking down on me, a very proud mother.

Writing this now, I’m very proud to say that I’m 107 days clean. I am excited to face the future with the tools I have learnt here.

You saved my life.”

Steve
Contents

Chairman's report 4
The Board and governance 5
Data 6-7
CEO's report 8
Supporting individuals, families and community 9-11
Residential Services: Farm TC 12-13
Palmerston’s methamphetamine response 14-16
Culturally secure practice and reconciliation 17-20
Diversity and unity 21-22
Mental health and AOD issues 23-24
Independent audit report 25-26
Acknowledgments 27
Chairman’s report

A successful year of achievements can only occur with strong leadership, a committed and dedicated workforce and a Board focused on strategy and governance.

I feel very proud of the achievements of Palmerston Association over the 2016/2017 financial year. Notably the staff have dedicated themselves to providing excellence in practice to the consumers who seek advice and support from our teams across the metropolitan area and in the Great Southern region.

Measuring organisational performance is a strong feature of Palmerston’s strategic activities. All staff are invited annually to rate key organisational characteristics (such as communication, training, policies and values). The results offer a transparent and robust measure of the health of the organisation and the strength of our culture, and help the Board monitor alignment of values with practice. We were delighted that 87% of staff rated the application of values across the organisation as very good or outstanding.

In November 2016 we were honoured to receive the prestigious Australian Institute of Management (Western Australia) Pinnacles Award for Workplace Diversity Excellence. Winning the Pinnacles Award was an incredible moment for our team, standing proudly together and it has encouraged an even greater commitment to excel in our workplace. Palmerston approached diversity in a systematic way, embracing a broad view of diversity beyond gender.

The award is a tribute to the Elders who advised on how to develop culturally sound interventions; it is also recognition of the commitment of our LGBTQI staff who spearheaded the change process, and the Board who embraced diversity in the broadest sense.

Palmerston was fortunate to secure new funding during the financial year to offer a stronger approach to methamphetamine. On behalf of the Board I acknowledge the support of our major State and Federal government funding partners, the Mental Health Commission (MHC), the Federal Department of Health, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) for supporting innovation and best practice.

The most significant development of the year was the Board’s decision to establish a residential service to support the South West community. Palmerston recognises the importance of giving communities choice and access to quality services and identified a property in Brunswick Junction as an excellent location for a residential facility. The service will be operational in 2018 following recent approval by the Shire of Harvey.

I congratulate our CEO Sheila McHale on her commitment, vision and achievements in 2016/2017. Her outstanding performance was recognised by the Australian Institute of Management (WA) awarding her the NFP CEO Leadership Excellence Award. She leads a wonderful workforce and a strong leadership team.

In January 2017 the Board was delighted to welcome Associate Professor Rebecca McKetin. She brings a strong academic background in alcohol and other drugs (AOD) research, particularly methamphetamine, to the Board.

As Chairman I am fortunate to have an independent, highly experienced Board and I thank them for their support and professionalism.

Julie Wager
Chairman
The Board and governance

Office bearers

Julie Wager, Chairman
Jeremy Rigg, Vice Chairman
Tony Silipo, Treasurer

Board members

Judy Alcock
Annalee Stearne
Alan Ferris
Carlo Bellini
Louise Forster
Rebecca McKetin

### BOARD MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE - JULY 2016 TO JUNE 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board (11)</th>
<th>Finance (8)</th>
<th>Governance and Risk (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actual</strong></td>
<td><strong>Actual</strong></td>
<td><strong>Actual</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie Wager - Chair</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Rigg - Vice Chair</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Silipo - Treasurer</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy Alcock</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Stearne</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Ferris</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlo Bellini</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise Forster</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca McKetin</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Reorganisation of committee structure

²leave of absence for three months

²² joined the Board in January 2017
Data

**METH USE**
- 2013 - 14: 21%
- 2014 - 15: 25%
- 2015 - 16: 30%
- 2016 - 17: 32%

**CONSUMERS SUPPORTED**
- Increase of 13% over two years

**AVERAGE AGE OF CONSUMERS**
- 34

**MALES: 63%**
**FEMALES: 37%**

**ABORIGINAL CONSUMERS**
- 11%

**FARM TC**
- Average Length of Stay: 8 weeks
  - **Male**: 60 days
  - **Female**: 50 days
  - Longest Stay
    - **Male**: 42 weeks
    - **Female**: 30 weeks

**INCREASE IN NUMBER OF FARM TC RESIDENTS OVER TWO YEARS**
- 39%

**METH USE**
- 2013 - 14: 21%
- 2014 - 15: 25%
- 2015 - 16: 30%
- 2016 - 17: 32%

**CONSUMERS SUPPORTED**
- Increase of 13% over two years

**AVERAGE AGE OF CONSUMERS**
- 34

**MALES: 63%**
**FEMALES: 37%**

**ABORIGINAL CONSUMERS**
- 11%

**FARM TC**
- Average Length of Stay: 8 weeks
  - **Male**: 60 days
  - **Female**: 50 days
  - Longest Stay
    - **Male**: 42 weeks
    - **Female**: 30 weeks

**INCREASE IN NUMBER OF FARM TC RESIDENTS OVER TWO YEARS**
- 39%
Drug of concern

Over the period in review, methamphetamine use has continued to rise, however not with the same magnitude as 2015/16. We have observed a reduction in alcohol as the primary drug of concern but interestingly after a period of moderate decline we have observed an increase in cannabis use during the financial year, however, not to the levels of 2013/14. We will also monitor any changes to the reporting of problems from the use of pharmaceutical drugs (over the counter and prescription medication). In relation to whether meth use has peaked, our data shows that it is too early to assume this, but again we will be monitoring use during the 2017/18 financial year.
This year’s annual report continues the theme of telling the stories of our consumers who work to overcome issues with alcohol and other drugs. The voices of our consumers ring loud with positive and hopeful messages, but they also illustrate the struggles and real challenges that are confronted every day by individuals and their families whilst on a personal journey of recovery. We are constantly moved by their determination to achieve a better state of wellbeing and a healthier, safer lifestyle.

With over 5700 consumers seeking support during the financial year, it is clear that the grip of methamphetamine (meth) has taken its toll on families, individuals and ultimately the community. A record number of residents passed through the Farm therapeutic community (TC) this year, reinforcing the need for investment in such services.

Palmerston Association secured additional funding from the Mental Health Commission and the WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) to develop a methamphetamine strategy. With trained meth counselling staff, family support and Saturday services, and the additional beds at the TC, the strategy has enabled Palmerston to support more consumers to deal with their drug concerns in a safe environment.

This year’s report reflects on what we have learnt about the practical and often poignant implications of working with methamphetamine and its impact on the community. There is a lot to learn from our consumers about our practice and approach, which we would like to share.

Maintaining our accreditation status at the higher level of good practice in July 2016 was a great way to start the year and reinforced the importance of striving for excellence and best practice. It also underscored the importance of listening to and learning from consumer feedback and engaging with significant community networks and organisations. Our work with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex (LGBTQI) community and our continuing relationship building with Elders are fine examples of this approach.

I would like to thank the management team and the wonderful staff of Palmerston for their loyalty to the organisation and for striving to do the very best for our consumers. Our corporate team has experienced the growth of our organisation during the year which has added to their responsibilities and work load. As the CEO, I would not have been able to achieve so much during the year without their unwavering and energetic commitment.

Sheila McHale
Chief Executive Officer
Supporting individuals, families and community

Our work with young people

Working with youth at risk often calls for a different approach to reach vulnerable young people. Our community development approach has produced positive results. The following examples reflect this:

- collaborating with Fremantle headspace to deliver the alcohol and other drug (AOD) component of a ten week group program at Wandoo reintegration facility. The program aims to educate, build trust and teach life skills, and resilience, to young men aged 18-24. Reported outcomes from the program have so far been positive, indicating improved self-esteem for participants;

- taking the lead in the development of a program under the auspices of the South West Metropolitan Partnership Forum to help young people at two primary schools transition to high school. The project, (Imagine Futures Program) aims to improve support networks for young people during their transition from primary school to high school. The project will pilot a school based program that identifies mentors within the high school population to work with year six students throughout their last term of primary school;

- development of a youth camping program for young Aboriginal people in the Peel region, in collaboration with the City of Mandurah, Clontarf Aboriginal College and the local high school;

- continued participation and collaboration with headspace youth mental health service across our branches;

- facilitating the delivery of ‘Identity Matters’, a sexual identity based program, to young people aged 15-17 at a local senior high school. The program was developed by the youth counsellors to address an increase in the reported number of young people entering into relationships that involve domestic violence and problematic AOD use;

- expanding the youth service capacity in the Great Southern during the year. Funded through WAPHA, additional resources have helped to reduce waiting times for young people who are now seen within days. New programs that cater specifically for young people are offered, including Drumbeat, a youth recreation program which includes cycling, gym, stand up paddle boarding and other recreational activities.

Partnerships

Palmerston is a partner organisation of two major consortia based projects funded by the WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA). With Richmond Wellbeing as the lead agency, the consortia's mandate is to improve outcomes through better integrated systems of AOD and mental health care for Aboriginal people across the metro area and for problematic alcohol and drug use and mental illness in the South metro area, using place based consultation and co-design of integrated services.

In 2016, Palmerston developed a Memorandum of Understanding with Breakaway Aboriginal Corporation (BAC), a local South West Aboriginal corporation, with a view to establishing a South West residential treatment service for individuals and their families affected by AOD problems. This was the catalyst for exploring possible sites and locations for the proposed facility which ultimately resulted in the chosen site of Brunswick Junction. Once established, we look forward to working with BAC and other organisations for guidance and collaboration on making the service culturally secure and responsive to local families in the South West.
Family work

Thank you so much for your support over the year with my son’s problems. As he continues his journey each day he is more like the person I know and love.

Claire

Family work in the form of counselling and support groups was provided across the two metropolitan and Great Southern CADS. Reflective family therapy utilising a two way mirror was provided at Fremantle and Rockingham.

Recognised for its strong focus on working with families, the Perth branch has continued to support many families. Over 20% of consumer work is family related. Having revamped the position of the senior family therapist, there will be a stronger emphasis in the coming year on family support for TC residents and their families, and support for the TC clinical team in the development of improved family inclusive practices.

Prevention and community education

We have maintained the focus on prevention through community education, services to youth, needle and syringe programs and through submissions in response to liquor licensing applications. These submissions provided an expert, local perspective on alcohol uptake and concerns about the availability of cheaper liquor.

One of the most exciting projects of the year was the collaboration with Indigenous Hip Hop Projects (IHHP) to develop “Standing Strong”, a video expressing the thoughts of the kids from Katanning High School on their attitude to drugs and alcohol. Working with the students for a week resulted in a three minute YouTube video. The project was made possible by the generosity of Allens legal firm. With the words developed by the students themselves, the chorus carried a “deadly” message:

“I’m not into drinking
I’m not into drugs
STAND STRONG
Gotta make a change
STAND STRONG.”

The video can be viewed at https://youtu.be/w-pTQFLeSBA

Prevention activities in the Great Southern have entered a new phase in the development of new collaborative AOD prevention plans in both the lower and upper Great Southern regions. With a strong focus on reducing the harms associated with the supply of alcohol to young people, including raising awareness of new secondary supply laws, membership of the management groups is at an all time high. These groups play a pivotal role in preventing harms associated with substance use in the community.
Developing our capacity

The reception area in Albany has not met the high standard that we want for our consumers. It has lacked privacy, comfort and visual amenity. This year therefore saw a major facelift and renovation to the area. The brand new waiting area is now a peaceful, welcoming space to relax while waiting to see a counsellor. The reception ensures greater privacy and confidentiality. The needle and syringe program can also operate with similar privacy and respect, with a discrete area dedicated to this important program. Our consumers are thrilled with how the space has improved their experience of our service.

![Albany reception and waiting area](image1)

During the year, we found suitable premises in Armadale to realise our goal of providing services closer to the community. This dedicated space promises to be a welcome way forward to more effective engagement with the Armadale community.

![Armadale office](image2)

Consumer participation

The Great Southern consumer reference group, now named 'Insight', has been operating for over a year. The group has matured rapidly and plays a pivotal role in the planning of Albany and Katanning services. A number of group members have been trained to facilitate SMART groups and we soon hope to offer after-hours SMART groups. The Insight group has also had significant influence on the redesign of the waiting and reception area, and now plans to revamp the external entry to the Albany office. This partnership is helping the Great Southern team move towards co-design and co-production.
Residential services: Farm TC

Dealing with drug use is a hard and emotional process. This is nowhere more noticeable than at the Farm TC. Often individuals who want to go to “rehab” do not know what is ahead of them. So how can we best describe the process that occurs at a TC? We think the most inspiring way is to let the residents themselves tell their stories.

The Farm TC has four stages from assessment through to transition back to the general community. Residents were invited to describe their experiences at different stages of the program and their own stages of personal change. Here are just some of their reflections.

Assessment

Sometimes overwhelming, but overall has been the best thing for me

Claire

I feel plenty of ups and downs but I feel it has all been beneficial for my recovery

Bec

Stage 1

A rollercoaster, I’ve cried, I’ve laughed, I’ve been angry, I’ve been sad. But I am learning how to be assertive, deal with stress. I’ve learnt to be happy without drugs.” RECOVERY IS HARD

Steve

Stage 2

A massive soul searching, thought provoking study of myself in an environment riddled with sadness/happiness, confusion/understanding, depression/inspiration, failure/achievement. Despair and hope, always believing… It has been more than an experience, it has been the start of a journey

Robert

Stage 3 – the essence of a therapeutic community

My personal opinion of a therapeutic community was that is was just a fancy word for REHAB!! I was completely wrong. A therapeutic community is run by the residents all focussing their actions and energy toward recovery-changing behaviour

Michael

Having initially been intimidated by the idea of living in a large community of complete strangers, that anxiety faded within the first two weeks. I have benefitted beyond belief from the insight provided by fellow residents and clinical members

Ridley

Life changing for the better. It has opened my eyes to the many things I have pushed away or shut off. Even though I might not agree or be annoyed at first how silly or harsh something might seem if I surrender and notice progress or my recovery strengthening, it is a safe environment to practise everything I may have an issue with. The bonus is there are 30 plus other people willing to help as they can relate

Daniel

These amazing personal stories of grief, loss, happiness and hope resonate throughout the TC experience. This is why Palmerston continues to expound the strength of the TC program and why we keep improving our facility as discussed in the following section.
Expanding our capacity

Under the State Government’s meth strategy, Palmerston was funded to increase our capacity by eight residents from 1 January 2017. These beds have experienced a high occupancy since inception. In the short term, the residents were accommodated by creating temporary spaces until our permanent facility – a retrofit of an existing building – came on stream with an additional six beds. The new house named in recognition of respected Aboriginal Elder Theresa Walley was officially opened very recently.

Roelands Retreat

Residents have attended weekend retreats to Roelands Village, creating a space for yarning and sharing of cultural and spiritual knowledge with the Elders. Residents also experience first-hand authentic bush tucker. Residents commented that they returned to the Farm TC feeling uplifted and with a deeper understanding and respect for Aboriginal culture.

Recognising Palmerston Life Members

The Palmerston of today is built on the efforts of many people over the decades. In particular, our life members are special people who gave their valuable time as Board Members and ambassadors for the organisation. It was very fitting that we could honour them by naming three Farm TC buildings after them in recognition of their contributions. Board Vice Chairman, Jeremy Rigg (far left in the photo below), acknowledged Maureen Hinton, Hal Jackson and George Davies (L to R) at a recent function.

Upgrading our facilities

One aspect about the Farm TC is that it never stops evolving to meet the needs and increasing number of our residents.

Take for example turning the old work shed into a new recreational room creating a central area for residents to play pool, darts and table tennis. This amazing transformation was designed and carried out by the residents. They are currently involved in creating the wall art to capture the spirit of the Farm TC and create a feeling of safety and peace for all residents, particularly those who are new to the Farm TC.
Palmerston’s methamphetamine response

Thank you very much for helping me get back on my feet and beat my addiction. Your counselling has helped save my life. Thanks again.

Michael

Palmerston’s meth strategy is informed by current and emerging evidence based research, as well as the reflections and experiences of our staff. The AOD sector is on a rapid learning curve in relation to the treatment of meth use. The residential service needs of meth users appear to differ from those of the traditional consumer base, and traditional outpatient counselling approaches are challenging for some meth users with possible cognitive impairment.

Consumer statistics

Meth consumers have increased significantly across Palmerston’s branches. A comparison of the four year period 2013-2017 shows that the percentage of consumers who stated that meth was their primary drug of concern has increased by 11%. The Farm TC has experienced a significant increase of consumers with meth as their primary drug over the same period of time, from 38% to 59%.

Designated specialist meth counsellors

As a result of MHC funding, Palmerston Association has employed dedicated staff to support our meth using consumers. This has helped to build up a clearer picture of the effectiveness of different therapeutic approaches along with consumers’ responses and behavioural concerns. It has also had a positive impact on waiting times.

Counsellors in charge of the meth group are absolute champions. Along with their welcoming attitude, understanding and great teaching techniques together really do make a great team. I feel a sense of great hope and applaud the Palmerston counsellors for their efforts.

Blair

Saturday services

A pilot of Saturday morning appointments commenced in April 2017 in the South Metropolitan Community Alcohol and other Drug Service (SMCADS) branches. They are generally booked to capacity. They offer a more relaxed atmosphere with fewer people around. They are particularly useful for family counselling where people are working.

CASE STUDY

Three pregnant women were some of the first consumers seen by the meth counsellor on Saturday, a more accessible service for them, in particular since they have other commitments/children. Some gratifying feedback has been that these consumers have now given birth to their children drug free, with no complications in relation to their previous meth use and report that they continue to be abstinent.
Meth clinic with Next Step
An integrated service meth clinic with the State Government Next Step service commenced at Rockingham in May 2017. The clinic offers a priority service to meth users comprising assessment, medical consultation and provision of pharmacotherapy treatment, case management and a group program. Referrals to the program commenced immediately and in the first week eight consumers were registered.

Meth family group
A three week group program provides meth education, strategies and support to families affected by meth use. Five programs have been delivered at Perth, Fremantle and Mandurah with demand particularly high at Mandurah. A modified version has been developed in the Great Southern.

Meth recovery support group
This is a rolling, open group, operating at Thornlie with a general meth recovery topic addressed each week. The content is adjusted each cycle to engage ongoing group members, and focusses on what meth is, its impact on feelings, managing cravings and relapses and challenges to recovery.

Attendance numbers are growing, currently at approximately six participants per week. Feedback continues to be extremely positive.

Community education
The additional funding has provided an excellent opportunity for increasing community education. Presentations on meth use, recovery and Palmerston’s services have been delivered across the branches to a number of venues including rotary clubs, parent groups, allied services and school conferences.

During the year, a meth family forum was held in Mandurah for over 100 participants including families, consumers and local service providers. It was extremely popular and the personal stories were touching, brave and inspiring. Dr Mat Coleman, addictions psychiatrist from Albany presented on the impact of methamphetamines.

I loved the courage of the people sharing their personal stories. I loved the honesty. I felt that it was great to be amongst other people who are feeling the same and we don’t need to be alone, best to share with others.

Family member

I understand I still have a long way to go in my recovery and can never afford to be complacent. But for the first time in many, many years I have the confidence and commitment to lead a happy and productive life.

Matt
Palmerston’s meth counsellors were asked to share their observations on clinical practice and consumer behaviours. Here are some of the lessons we have learnt:

- Meth consumers take a longer period to engage, and when they do engage they are often chaotic.
- They can be erratic in attendance.
- Depression and anxiety are common among consumers in withdrawal.
- Grief and loss are experienced by many consumers, as they address the significant gap in their lives when no longer using meth.
- Consumers report repeated experiences of abuse/trauama/toxic relationships directly associated with a meth-using lifestyle.
- Consumers report a link between the beginning of their use or the increase of their use with experiences of significant grief and loss. Methamphetamine becomes a quickly learnt, unhealthy coping skill.
- The role of connection and positive support for consumers through their recovery has been shown to be significantly beneficial.
- Very few consumers are aware of the actual impact that methamphetamine has on their brain, their mental health, their emotions and their day-to-day functioning.
- Some are pressured into attending by their families and loved ones, and this can often be connected to recent crisis including psychotic episodes.
- The initial engagement can be a challenging process and a significant amount of work is necessary on motivation to change.
- Meth users appear to present with a sense of hopelessness due to the effects of coming down, and many report that they feel they are unable to stop using in their current environment.
- A stronger emphasis is placed on physical health, given the profound impact methamphetamine has on health and the vital role that good health plays in cognitive recovery from methamphetamine. Specific areas of focus are nutrition, sleep hygiene and the management and prevention of viral illness.
- The propensity for crisis presentations has also shifted the way of working, requiring counsellors to respond more often. Brief intervention approaches are used more often, and the strong relationships with mental health and other crisis services become invaluable.
- Cognitive impairment associated with harmful methamphetamine use has had an observable impact on some consumers’ attention span and retention of strategies and guidance provided through counselling sessions.

This is the first time I have spoken about this in front of people. I feel I do not need to hide any more. Thank you.

Jen
Culturally secure practice and reconciliation

One of the most profound drivers of change in Palmerston’s approach to cultural security has been its participation since 2012 in the “Looking Forward Project” (LFP). The key to this project is building relationships and trust with Nyoongar Elders.

Palmerston is delighted that Dr Wright, the lead researcher on the project, has secured a five year National Health and Medical Research Council grant. This is a reflection of the exciting and innovative Looking Forward, Moving Forward project and we look forward to participating in the study.

A willingness and openness to learn new ways of relating to the Nyoongar community under the guidance of Nyoongar Elders has already resulted in changes to our practice.

The number of Aboriginal people seeking support from Palmerston has increased over the previous 12 months. Overall, 11% of our consumers identified as Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander people, an increase of 1.5% on the previous financial year. This modest increase is spread over most of our branches but the rates of Aboriginal people accessing our service across the branches vary. In Katanning, 51% of consumers were Aboriginal, and in Albany, 16% were Aboriginal. Across the metropolitan community services, the average was 8% and at the Farm TC, we supported 46 Aboriginal residents representing 20% of the resident population. Working constructively and respectfully with Aboriginal organisations and Aboriginal Elders is helping to increase our cultural response.

The launch of the Palmerston Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

The launch of the first Palmerston RAP at the annual staff big day out in 2017 was a highlight of the year. As an innovate RAP endorsed by Reconciliation Australia, the Plan provides a clear direction to the whole of Palmerston from the Board down.
Making access to services more appropriate

Following consultation with the Peel Koolbardi’s Women’s Talking Group, Elders and community members, Palmerston has committed to a trial of in-home counselling. The service will commence in September 2017. This outcome demonstrates the value of working with the Elders, and of talking and listening to our consumers.

Cultural retreats and camps

Our Mandurah, Rockingham and Farm TC staff facilitated three cultural retreats at Roelands Mission in the South West for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents from the Farm TC. The residents met with local Aboriginal Elders and learnt about the history of Roelands which has significance for members of the Stolen Generation.

Cultural events

Sorry Day, Reconciliation and NAIDOC weeks were celebrated by staff events across all branches.

Events included:
- a smoking ceremony at the Mandurah office, bringing together over 50 people from the community, entertained by Aboriginal dancers and guidance from local Elders
- Katanning Sorry Day attended by approximately 250-300 people from Katanning and surrounding regions of Gnowangerup, Tambellup, Broomehill, Kojonup and Albany. The day was supported financially by the Shire of Katanning. Palmerston Association worked with the Shire and the Elders to make this a wonderful day of recognition, healing and reconciliation.
- art exhibition and networking with Aboriginal workers at Thornlie
- the Terrace walk for reconciliation from Stirling Gardens to Government House
- painted hands in Kings Square Fremantle
- Sorry day interactive display – Albany waiting area.

A project funded through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) in the Great Southern has reached close to 300 individuals through groups or individually. The program has the flexibility to operate in a culturally secure and informal way that enables people to seek support without the perceived barriers that may block some people from accessing individual counselling.

Using a process of cultural “roaming”, time is spent in each community, using kinship links and relationships to “roam” from one family group to the next while identifying families and individuals who might require support.
The launch of the Yaburgurt art installation

In March 2017, the Yaburgurt art installation was launched in Mandurah. The art installation commemorates and honours the life of Yaburgurt (George Winjan), a prominent Noongar elder in the Peel region whose life spanned a period of tremendous change in Western Australia’s history. Born in 1824, prior to European colonisation, Yaburgurt survived the Pinjarra massacre at the age of 10 and lived in and around the Peel region during its early development.

In 2013, the Koolbardies talking group led discussions with the City of Mandurah to commemorate the centenary of Yaburgurt’s death in 2015. Our Mandurah staff were part of the reference group, chaired by respected Aboriginal leader, George Walley, that supported the project.
Red Dust healing in Albany

Palmerston Great Southern CADS has been engaged to deliver Red Dust Healing training for 12 facilitators from various agencies in the Great Southern, working with Aboriginal young people. The program uses a visual map to explore the relationship between culture, trauma, history and healing.

An Aboriginal networking forum brought together Aboriginal workers from the South East corridor. Organised by Sherry McLaughlin from our Thornlie team, attendees had the pleasure of a welcome to country from Reynold Indich and an art exhibition of artist Wendy Fiefer from Nannup.

L to R - Sheila, Reynold, Wendy and Sherry
Diversity and unity

Creating an LGBTQI friendly service

Spearheaded by staff openly identifying as members of the LGBTQI community, Palmerston has committed to an LGBTQI-friendly service. Palmerston feels it is important now, more than ever, to explore ways in which Palmerston can improve in its ability to engage with members of this community.

To lead the transformative diversity agenda, the organisation adopted four key principles:

1. diversity is everyone’s business and is good business
2. culture and values drive change
3. systematic change takes time
4. leadership in diversity has to be highly visible and authentic.

The Board has endorsed the strategy and a working group comprising staff and LGBTQI consumers has been formed to develop a change action plan and key drivers for change.

Changes that have already occurred are:

- LGBTQI inclusivity training is now an integral part of working with Palmerston
- changing attitudes are apparent following training
- use of symbolic signs of an LGBTQI service such as wearing Pride flag pins, rainbow stickers and bracelets, and welcome signs
- 95 staff received Open Closets training and 25 will be trained early in the next financial year
- the Board Members received training
- recruitment of LGBTQI consumer representatives onto the Palmerston working party
- a commitment to march in the 2017 PrideWA parade.
The entire Palmerston staff coming together in March 2017 as a sign of unity and celebration.
Mental health and AOD issues

Wearing odd socks for a day was the flavour for a cool October day for the South East Metropolitan Community Alcohol and other Drugs Service (SEMCADS) in Thornlie. With 50% of its consumers having a mental health issue as well as a drug and or alcohol issue, the Thornlie team put their feet where it mattered – in odd socks – in order to raise funds to assist the work of the self-help mental health organisation GROW.

The SEMCADS team wanted to raise a target of $100 for GROW and at the same time recognise the impact of mental health on their consumers’ lives. In the last financial year, the team supported over 1000 people from the southern suburbs which means that at least 500 consumers would have a mental health concern. The team exceeded their fundraising target and had a good time in the process.
PODCaB Consortium
Since 2012, the consortium supporting Palmerston, Outcare and DAWN (PODCaB) has been working to strengthen organisational capacity to identify and deliver quality evidence based services to consumers with comorbid AOD and mental health issues.
This year’s highlights include:

Consumer snapshot
In November each year, PODCaB collects additional information on consumers seen over a two week period as part of a quality improvement process to inform future planning and ensure services are meeting the needs of consumers.

Of the 627 Palmerston consumers surveyed, more than half reported having mental health concerns, the most common being depression and anxiety. Methamphetamine, alcohol and cannabis were the main drugs of concern.

In 2016, the snapshot surveyed staff awareness of consumers who identify as being a member of the LGBTQI community. The survey indicated just over 6% of consumers identified as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender or intersex. Recent studies suggest that the LGBTQI community account for approximately 10% of the population. The 2016 National Drug Strategy Household Survey highlights the usage of illicit drugs amongst the LGBTQI community and therefore Palmerston will continue to increase its efforts to ensure services are sensitive to the needs of this community.

As part of our commitment to ensure staff are trained to provide a safe, inclusive service, PODCaB funded Living Proud to deliver nine Opening Closets mental health training sessions to 151 staff across the three organisations.

Professional development
Following a needs assessment to identify priority areas, staff attended training in feedback informed treatment, Advanced ACT, child abuse and neglect, family and domestic violence, Mental Health First Aid, AOD values and attitudes, trauma informed care and vicarious trauma, using lived experience, and SMART Recovery facilitator training.

Peer workers
In July 2016, Palmerston peer workers attended a focus group facilitated by the Mental Health Commission to share insights around their journey to recovery. This valuable information enriched the Commission’s research into AOD recovery theory and informed the development of training for health professionals. Participants acknowledged the rewards that came with recovery:

> “It evolves as I get further from that day… early days it was about just don’t pick up… now it’s family, relationships, independence, financial independence and management of behaviours.”

The group emphasised the value of peers through the recovery process, stating peers offer support and hope that ‘things can get better’. Structured peer support, such as Palmerston’s SMART Recovery groups, enables a process where they can now provide this support to others.

Partnerships and networking
A variety of initiatives were implemented to enhance linkages and partnerships with AOD, mental health and key community service providers. These included a walking tour of AOD services for culturally and linguistically diverse organisations, a series of interviews on Swahili radio, a networking meeting to discuss family and domestic violence services, and a gathering of Aboriginal workers at the South East Metropolitan CADS.
Independent Auditor’s Report
to the Members of Palmerston Association Inc.

Auditor’s Opinion
We have audited the financial report of Palmerston Association Inc. (the Association), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2017, and the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and comprising notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies and the statement by the Directors.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of Palmerston Association Inc.:

presents fairly, in all material respects, the Association’s financial position as at 30 June 2017 and of its performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1.

Basis for Auditor’s Opinion
We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor’s Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the Association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board’s APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Basis of Accounting
We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The special purpose financial report has been prepared in order to meet the requirements of the Australian Charities and Non-for-profits Commission Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion has not been modified in respect of this matter.
Independent audit report

The Board of Directors of the Association are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report and have determined that the accounting policies used and described in Note 1 to the financial report, which form part of the financial report, are appropriate to meet the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. This responsibility includes such internal controls as the Directors determine are necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Directors are responsible for assessing the Association’s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Association’s financial reporting process.

Auditor’s Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report
Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor’s report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_files/ar3.pdf. This description forms part of our auditor’s report.

GRANT THORNTON AUDIT PTY LTD
Chartered Accountants

C A Becker
Partner - Audit & Assurance

Perth, 3 October 2017

Our full financial reports are available on the ACNC website.
Acknowledgments

Palmerston is funded through contracts with the Federal and State Governments and various other sources of project funding and private giving as well as in kind support. Palmerston would like to acknowledge the following organisations for their generous and valuable contribution.

Major partners

The Government of Western Australia, through
• Mental Health Commission
• Health Department of WA

The Australian Government, through
• Department of Health
• Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
• Department of Veteran Affairs
• The WA Primary Health Alliance

Other supporters and partnerships
• 360 Health and Community
• Wungening Aboriginal Corporation (formerly Aboriginal Alcohol and Drug Service)
• Adzoo
• Allens Linklaters
• Amity Health
• Anglicare, WA
• Australian Institute of Management Western Australia (AIM WA)
• City of Belmont
• Community Employers Western Australia
• Dee Roche and Associates
• Drug and Alcohol Withdrawal Network (DAWN)
• headspace WA
• Healthway
• Hepatitis WA
• Hinton family
• Ian Silver, Executive Consultant
• Lotterywest
• Morley Davis Architects
• Outcare
• Richmond Wellbeing
• Shire of Katanning
• Southern Aboriginal Corporation
• Wednesday Masters Hockey
• Western Australian Council of Social Services (WACOSS)
• Western Australian Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA)

We also acknowledge the many partnerships that are enshrined in MOUs or Local Service Agreements throughout the metropolitan and Great Southern regions.

Private giving

We would like to express our gratitude to the many individuals and organisations who generously donate to Palmerston Association and who wish to remain anonymous.
We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of this land upon which we walk together. We recognise that Palmerston services are located on Nyoongar country.