

# COI CONVERSE

illawarra, shoalhaven and southern highlands

**community options - quality options**

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## ABILITY BALL

Celebrating the international Day of Ability, local service providers and government organisations organised the Ability Ball which was held at the Chifley Wollongong on 1st November 2013.

Management and staff from Community Options Illawarra attended the night, which included inaugural awards presentations for a number of categories, including Illawarra Person of the Year. The night also included endless dancing, prizes for the best dancers and lucky door prizes, it was a great night out.

## LEADERSHIP NETWORK GROUP

Community Options Illawarra is pleased to be a member of the recently formed Illawarra Leadership Network (ILN).

The ILN has been formed to enhance support for people with disability via increasing communication, cooperation and coordination between service providers. While disability service providers within the Illawarra already work in close association with each other the forming of the Leadership Network will assist in increasing collaboration and the sharing of resources to provide better outcomes.



Membership of the Network include Community Options Illawarra, The Flagstaff Group, Interchange Illawarra, The Cram Foundation, Greenacres disability services, Essential Personnel, Life Without Barriers and The Disability Trust.

## CEO REPORT

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Welcome to Community Options Illawarra's (COI) Summer edition of COI Converse and to my first CEO report. I will start by introducing myself, my name is Craig Thomson and I feel privileged to have been selected by the Board of Management to lead COI in what will be a time of immense change within the sectors over the next few years. I am a resident of Scarborough but for the past four years I have worked for the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC) as their Director, Clinical Services. I am extremely pleased to again be working within my home community of the Illawarra and the south Coast. A large part of my responsibilities with RIDBC was to lead the development of the organisation into person centred funding models such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). I have had the opportunity to meet some of you and I look forward to catching up with as many clients, partner organisations and members as possible. Please feel free to contact me at any time I would love to hear from you.

I said above that I feel privileged to have been appointed as Chief Executive, that feeling has been further strengthened after learning of the immense respect that the South Coast Community has for COI. This is a direct reflection of the level of dedication and commitment of COI staff in ensuring that our clients remain a valued and active member of their community. While in the process of preparing my report a staff member dropped into my office and relayed a story of a client with a particularly complex situation. This client experienced a dramatic change in their health and required immediate support. COI responded and arranged the necessary assessments and support services within one day. This fantastic outcome was only achievable due to COI's strong links and relationships within the community and government services.

Having said that it is clear that COI like all organisations working within aged care and disability have a challenge ahead of it to ensure it is flexible, relevant and accessible to its clients and that we truly hold person centeredness as a core organisation value and not just as a 'buzz' word in our communications.

Much work has already been done to ensure COI is prepared for the challenges but there is still a lot more to do. I, along with the COI Board, clients and staff, are reviewing the COI Strategy and preparing a revised strategy which will provide a clear roadmap for COI. Once this is finalised I will share the details with you. I look forward to working with our partners and clients in this exciting phase for COI.

Finally as it is rapidly approaching the festive season I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Please stay safe have a relaxing break and I look forward to catching up in the New Year.

### **Craig Thomson**

*Chief Executive Officer*



# NEWS AND EVENTS

## CEO RETIREMENT

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Retirement in July 2013, of long serving CEO Anja Nivala.

Anja was CEO for the past 15 years and had overseen a tremendous growth in the organisation from five employees and one office to 32 employees and four offices. Over the years there has also been an increase in funding programs which enhanced the organisation and encouraged diversity in service provision.

Anja was farewelled at a function attended by staff, board members and colleagues from within the sector. Anja was recognised on her retirement by her peers in the sector and she continues to serve on several committees and Boards.



*We thank her for her commitment and passion to COI.*

## PLANNING AHEAD FORUM

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On 30 July, Kate Troy and Dianne Zisis attended the Planning Ahead Forum presented by Alzheimer's Australia NSW and the Illawarra Consumer Advisory Group at the Illawarra Master Builder's Club.

The forum was designed to provide information to families living with dementia to assist them plan for the future, and showcased a number of informative guest speakers and an expo of local support

services. Speakers included Sharon Wall, Founder of Ageing by Caring who discussed advanced care planning; Dr. Lyn Phillipson, University of Wollongong who spoke about navigating the service system; Kim Cooper, who discussed estates, power of attorney and guardianship, and Pat Joyce, from The Aged Care Rights Service who talked about transitioning to residential care.

This forum was supported by the Illawarra Dementia Support Network of which COI is a member organization. Kate and Dianne were on hand with Vicki Snelling and Lorraine McCabe from Wollongong City Council's Dementia Respite Service to provide service information to participants.

## IDO EXPO

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The Illawarra Disability Options (iDo) Expo is an annual event showcasing the Illawarra region's many study and work options available to people with a disability.

The free expo held in August 2013, at the Builders club, is an invaluable resource for the people of the Illawarra Community. Community Options Illawarra, along with more than 40 services and organisations attended the event. The focus is to assist families, students and the community to acquire information and establish relationships that will enable people with a disability to select appropriate career pathways.



## DEMENTIA AWARENESS WEEK

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As part of Dementia Awareness Week the Shoalhaven local Dementia Advisory Service together with Community Options Illawarra, Nowra Adult Day Care and Bay and Basin Community Resources Inc., hosted a morning tea on Wednesday 18th September. 102 people living with memory loss due to dementia and their carers attended a morning of memories to highlight the benefits of music, socialisation and exercise.

This activity was funded by Alzheimer's Australia NSW through the Support Group funding. A great morning of fun, food and entertainment was had by all that attended.



## CARER'S WEEK

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Carer's week gives us an opportunity to recognise the amazing contribution that carer's make to our community.

National carers week events were held from the 13th to the 19th October 2013. Community Options Illawarra organised a group of a carers from the Support Coordination for Older Parent Carers Program to attend a matinee performance of South Pacific in Sydney.



## MEMORY WALK

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This year's Illawarra Memory Walk and Jog was held in October 2013. It was the most successful yet, with more than 900 people running, walking and volunteering for the Alzheimer's fundraising event.

Having started six years ago as a community effort this has grown to become an important awareness event In 2013. Participants included people with dementia and their families and friends, along with people running or walking in memory of a loved one they have lost to the condition.

The Memory Walk has been run in the Illawarra for the past six years and is designed to raise awareness and money for the more than 320,000 Australians living with dementia. More than \$40,000 has been raised from the Illawarra event so far.

## DANCERCISE

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Dancercise program in Basin View Masonic Village's hall for people with Neurological / Parkinson's diagnosis. The project runs for 12 weeks weekly on Tuesdays from 10.00am - 12.00pm.

**For more information contact Jaye on 0401 200 720.**



## MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

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The Mental Health Expo held in the Wollongong Mall in October 2013 is part of the annual Mental Health Month NSW national mental health promotion campaign. Community Options Illawarra and other organisations held information stalls on the day.

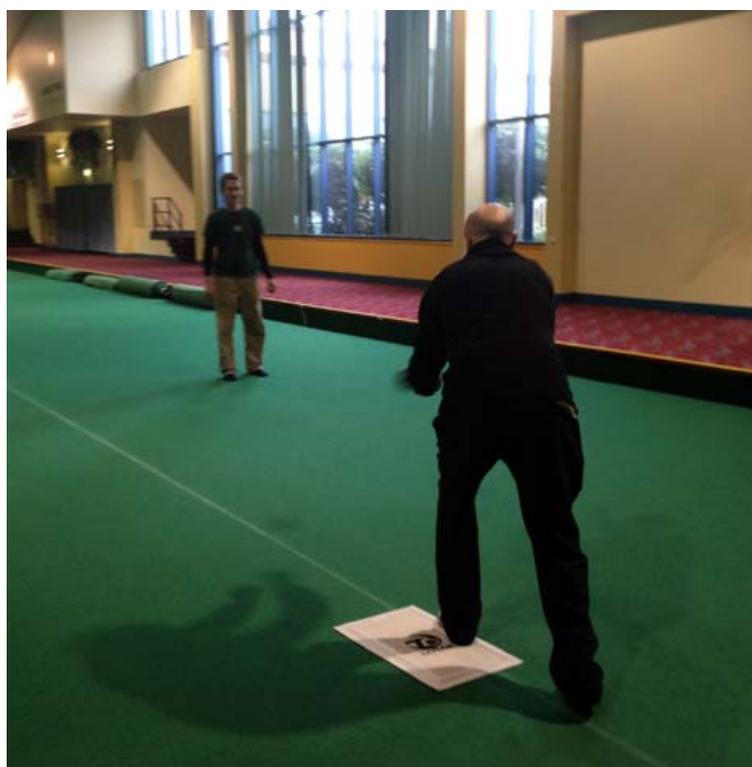
Mental Health Month encourages everyone to think about their mental health and wellbeing. It is important to look after ourselves and each other and to treat each other the way we want to be treated. That is why the theme this year for Mental Health Month 2013 was 'Kindness: little acts, big impacts!' The theme is a reminder of the importance of kindness and generosity to our mental health and well being, both as givers and receivers.

## YOD TUESDAY ACTIVITY GROUP

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Community Options Illawarra supports a number of people caring for relatives who have been diagnosed with Younger Onset Dementia. This group of people has unique needs and it has proved beneficial for carers and people living with dementia to meet and form supportive friendships with others in a similar situation.

A seven week Tuesday Activity Program for people living with Younger Onset Dementia and their carers was organised for 2013. Events included: Mt Kembla Heritage Centre, Boat Harbourwalk, Ten Pin Bowling, Australian Motor Museum Visit, Wollongong Botanic Gardens Visit.





## **96.5 FM WAVE WORKPLACE FOR A DAY**

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Community Options Illawarra was nominated by Sue Kuebler, case manager COI, and selected as the 96.5FM workplace of the day.

Morning tea/coffee was kindly provided by Wavey and the team of 96.5FM. Community Options was on air from 6.15am to 5.15pm and ongoing all week providing information about our services to the community.

## **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY**

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International Day for People with a Disability (IDPwD) is a United Nations sanctioned day that aims to promote an understanding of people with disabilities as well as encourage support for their dignity, rights and well being.

On the 4th of December 2013 our “International Day for People with a Disability” event was held. This event provided an opportunity for our clients and carers to spend a fun day out enjoying entertainment that was organised: A magician / comedian provided laughs and entertainment. A professional photographer, Dave Ghaleb was on hand to take family and individual portraits that were later sent out to our families.

Our ambassador’s for the day, Steve Phillips on behalf of his son, Paul Phillips and Jeff and Pam Kean shared their personal stories, their success and struggles and their involvement with Community Options Illawarra.



## YOUNGER ONSET DEMENTIA

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Community Options Illawarra provides case management support for people living with younger onset dementia (YOD) who have complex care needs. Community Options also supports those caring for people with younger onset dementia to continue in their caring role.

For further information on the following three groups contact intake/referral ph: **1300 657 473**.

### Bi-Monthly Support Group

*For people living with YOD and their carers.*

**When:** The first meeting for 2014 will be on the 6th of February, 10.00am - 12.00pm

**Where:** Meadows cottage 29 McGrath Street, Fairy Meadow. Morning tea is provided. All people living with YOD and their carers are welcome to attend. Please call prior to the 6th Feb to register your interest.

### Monday Gym Group

*For men living with YOD*

**When:** Recommences 13th January 2014.

### Thursday Fortnightly Gym Group

*For people living with YOD and their carers.*

This group meets informally for walks and cafe' visits on alternate Thursdays.

**When:** Recommences 16th January 2014

## SUPPORT GROUP

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**Social Connections:** In the southern Shoalhaven, Community Options Illawarra has been facilitating the development of a social group for men with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI).

The men all live in small coastal villages and as such have limited opportunities for socialising or attending group activities. Through their individual funding and community transport these men meet weekly to share and enjoy community activities.

## AGM 2012/2013

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Community Options Illawarra 25th Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday 27 November 2013, at the Sebel Harbourside Kiama.

This year we recognise our staff for continued service to the organisation.

### 5 Years

- Lesley Andrew
- Kate Troy
- Susan Moore
- Emilie Martin
- Snezana Brdnik-Donevska
- Jennifer Johnson

### 10 Years

- Maria Puljic

### 15 Years

- Dianne Zisis

### 20 Years

- Anna Assimakopoulos





## CONTACTS FOR CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

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Community Options Illawarra will be closed from:  
**1.00pm Tuesday 24th December 2013**  
and will reopen: **Thursday 2nd January 2014.**

If you require assistance regarding your services during this time please call your direct service provider.

Absolute Home Care .....	<b>6112 8886</b>
Afea Home Care Services .....	<b>8913 6400</b>
All Parental Care P/L .....	<b>9520 2966</b>
Always There- Essential Care .....	<b>4260 8498</b>
Anglicare/Chesalon .....	<b>4226 3872</b>
Anglican Retirement Villages .....	<b>4443 6914</b>
Australian Home Care Services .....	<b>1300 303 770</b>
Bay & Basin Community Resources .....	<b>4422 7422</b>
Braidwood MPS .....	<b>4842 2566</b>
Elleishas Home Services .....	<b>4284 1918</b>
ESP Healthcare .....	<b>1300 377 432</b>
Fair Repairs .....	<b>4423 3283</b>
Greenacres Disability Services .....	<b>4226 6014</b>
Gunning DC&HC .....	<b>4845 1166</b>
Home Care Services .....	<b>4262 9700</b>
House with No Steps .....	<b>4221 0300</b>
Illawarra Nursing Services .....	<b>4254 6226</b>

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Illawarra Retirement Trust .....	4251 5600
Interchange Illawarra .....	4227 1079
Interchange Shoalhaven .....	4423 0255
Julie Warner .....	9957 1166
Just Better Care Illawarra .....	4298 4666
Just Better Care Canberra & SE NSW .....	6280 4070
Milton Ulladulla Nursing Services .....	4454 0928
NSW Health Southern NSW .....	4832 1300
Nursing Group .....	8778 7777
Rdns Homecare .....	1300 665 444
South Coast Home Health Care .....	4252 0555
South Coast Home Health Care Shoalhaven .....	4441 7760
The Disability Trust/Care Solutions .....	4255 8000
Warrigal .....	4257 4257
<b>Emergency Respite or Emergency Dementia Respite:</b>	
Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre .....	1800 059 059
<b>Disability Emergency Respite: The Disability Trust</b> .....	4255 8000



## community options - quality options

### wollongong

**ph:** 02 4226 3611 **fx:** 02 4229 4668  
**ad:** 193 Church Street, Wollongong NSW 2500  
**po:** PO Box 1433, Wollongong NSW 2500

### shellharbour

**ph:** 02 4220 8700 **fx:** 02 4297 7200  
**ad:** 10/75 Cygnet Avenue, Shellharbour NSW 2529  
**po:** PO Box 1433, Wollongong NSW 2500

### nowra

**ph:** 02 4428 7300 **fx:** 02 4422 5076  
**ad:** 51 Graham Street, Nowra NSW 2541  
**po:** PO Box 1507, Nowra NSW 2541

### bungendore

**ph:** 02 6238 1872 **fx:** 02 6238 0589  
**ad:** 2 Majara Street, Bungendore NSW 2621  
**po:** PO Box 355, Bungendore NSW 2621

### intake & referral 1300 657 473

The Intake and Referral Officer will facilitate all referral for the Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama, Shoalhaven, Queanbeyan, Upper Lachlan & Pallerang LGA area.

#### office hours

Mon to Fri 8:30am to 4:30pm

#### website

[www.coi.org.au](http://www.coi.org.au)



[www.facebook.com/communityoptionsillawarrainc](http://www.facebook.com/communityoptionsillawarrainc)

