



WAYAHEAD Annual Report 2020



“I must thank my wonderful team who never stop to amaze me in how adaptable and creative they can be, and how committed they are to better mental health for our community”

There is no doubt that these 12 months have brought a number of changes.

Firstly, we moved house – after 13 years in Woolloomooloo we moved to a new office in Pyrmont that is modern and bright. There was some sadness in moving from such a familiar area to another part of the city where we had to adapt to transport and learning what the local area offers. On the whole it went smoothly thanks to work of our staff. It was made a little less painful with our partner organisations from William Street (Mental Health Carers NSW, SMART Recovery, International Social Services, and The Men’s Table) moving with us.

Secondly, no surprise here, there was COVID-19. One month after moving office we started to work from home. Our new office was quiet, and we set up our home offices. For some it was easy, for others more difficult. Technology provided some hurdles although when up and running, it is essential to our ongoing success. We have all become skilled in using Zoom, running webinars, and connecting remotely. WayAhead has often talked about using this type of technology and now we are all doing it.

Thirdly, our funding has been transferred from the Mental Health Commission NSW to the NSW Ministry of Health. We have enjoyed working closely with the Commission over the last few years and we hope our partnership will continue, though with a slightly changed relationship.

There are many people I would like to thank and unfortunately there is not enough room to do justice to everyone. But I must thank my wonderful team who never stop to amaze me in how adaptable and creative they can be, and how committed they are to better mental health for our community. Thanks to our Board who provide the strong foundation for the WayAhead staff.

For the first time ever we are trialling our Annual Report online you can find it at wayahead.org.au/annual-report-2020/

Finally, a big thank you to the people who regularly connect with us – whether volunteering, offering their expertise or advice, or just calling us on the phone to have a conversation. They all help us to work better. Thank you to everyone.

Elizabeth Priestley
CEO



Well what a year! From the fires to the pandemic, individuals, communities and organisations have all been impacted. WayAhead has had to respond to these challenges.

As a state leader in mental health promotion, our goal is to facilitate mental health programs that have positive impacts on people's lives. From the beginning of the pandemic, WayAhead followed the advice of health authorities very closely by revising our everyday work practices and making it possible for staff to work from home. Our scheduled face-to-face events were disrupted, for example, our WayAhead Workplaces meetings and Public Anxiety Forums.

But, due to the dedication of our staff, we were able to respond to the changed environment by facilitating the development of online opportunities for people to access our Anxiety Support Groups and Small Steps forums, and of course, our Mental Health Information Line, online Fact Sheets and the WayAhead Directory were still available.

As President and Chairperson, it is a great privilege to be part of an active and engaged group of directors, overseeing the governance of WayAhead. This year the Board focused on developing our Strategic Plan for 2019-2023 and supporting our staff and volunteers in new premises and during such difficult times. Our Board, our staff and volunteers are a diverse group of people, dedicated to championing the emotional and mental wellbeing of all people through education, information, support and advocacy. We want to thank everyone, the Board, CEO, staff and volunteers for your commitment and dedication. May the next year be brighter!

Dr Meg Smith
President

Sharyn McGee
Chairperson

We work towards building a society that understands, values and contributes to the best possible mental health and wellbeing for all

We tackle prejudice and stigma to encourage people to seek help

We know that there are number of barriers that can discourage people from reaching out so we work to dismantle them and share ways of learning more and finding support.

What we did this year:

- As part of Mental Health Month, we created extensive downloadable resources, including a Schools Pack to support mental health learning in the classroom, and content supporting social connection and stigma reduction in communities.
- Our Perinatal Depression and Anxiety Awareness Week campaign, “Your baby is 1 in a million, are you 1 in 5?” continued in 2019 following overwhelmingly positive feedback, and ongoing demand for resources.
- We awarded 23 small grants for PNDA Awareness Week Events, with responses to the events funded by the grants overwhelmingly positive.
- We also printed and posted 15,000 resources across the state, with demand for these resources continuing throughout the year.
- We also provided speakers for several PNDA Awareness Week activities to share experiences and provide audiences with insights into perinatal mental health.
- We collaborated with Western Sydney University to develop and launch the 10 Tips to Stress Less at Uni, which were informed by research and extensive consultation with students from three universities. The project also included a design competition for students, with the winning student’s work adopted as the tips’ official designs.
- We attended Mardi Gras’ Fair Day once again in 2020, sharing positive mental health messages and WayAhead-branded collateral, like rainbow badges, as well as gathering feedback from attendees about actions they undertook to take care of their own mental health.
- The WayAhead Workplaces Lead presented on the program and on workplace mental health and wellbeing topics to a number of different audiences including: staff at Fossil; the NSW Government Social Media Community of Practice; the Probus Club Mt Colah for Mental Health Month; the Wellness Wise Practitioner training course.
- The WayAhead Workplaces Lead also delivered: the opening address for PEXA’s Mental Health Month breakfast, where they chose to donate to WayAhead; a panel at the Get Healthy at Work 2.0 re-launch; facilitation of panel discussions at the New Zealand Mental Health Conference in Christchurch; and co-chairing the Workplace Mental Health Symposium in Brisbane.



We lower barriers to accessing information and finding the right support

Our usual direct delivery of information and support to the community was affected in the last quarter of the year by the impacts of COVID-19, which exacerbated the need that people had in accessing support and information. Though challenging, it has been a year of reflection and rejuvenation for many of our programs, with many working to deliver information online.



What we did this year:

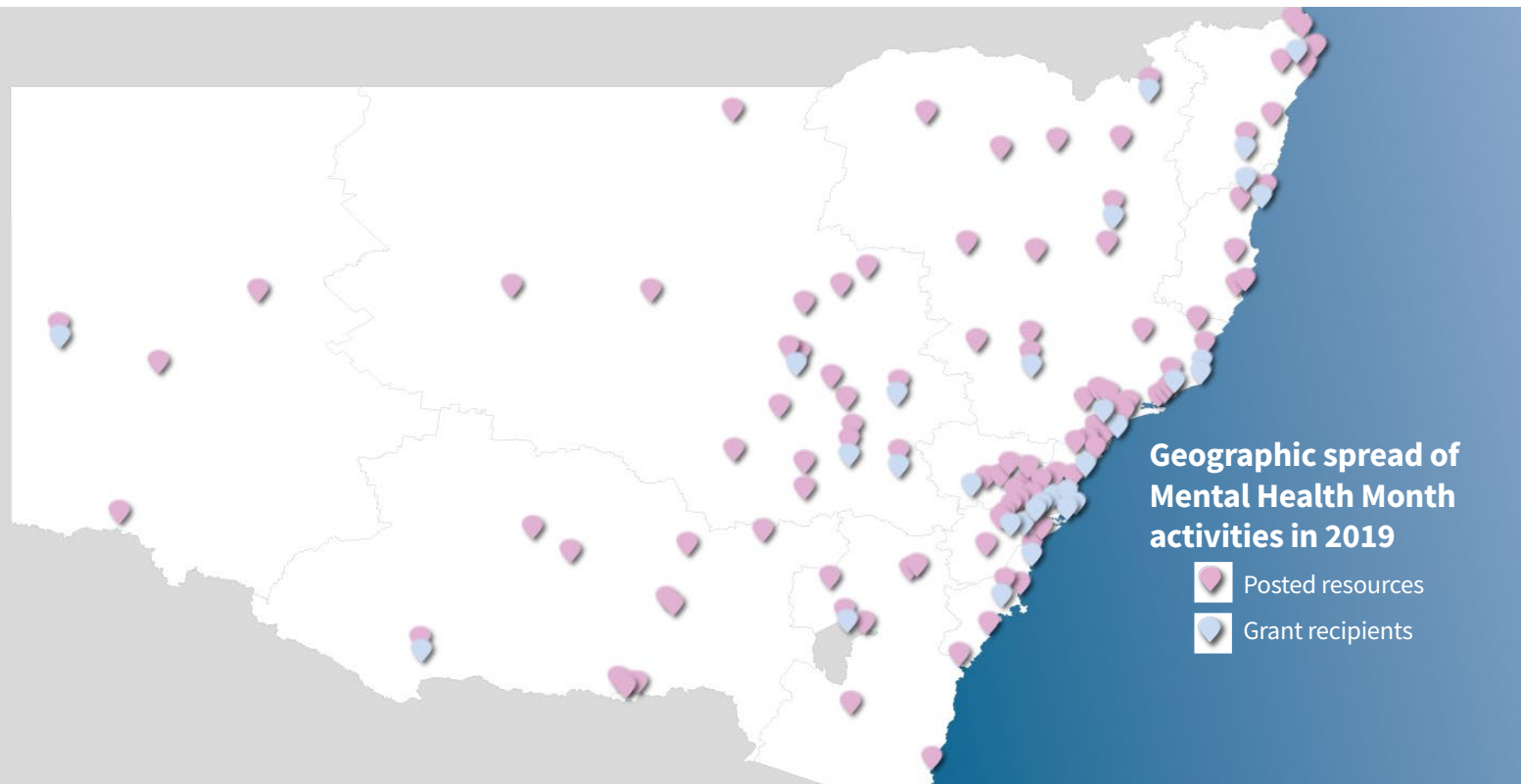
- We responded to the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic by writing and sharing a series of articles, shared through social media and email, about taking care of your mental health, staying connected in spite of distancing, and tips from our team on tackling isolation, with our Facebook post on taking care of your mental health reaching 11,225 people through 44 shares.
- Face-to-face support groups were suspended in March and continued online, with the delivery of some groups online to continue into the future as an ongoing offering through the program.
- We held 241 face-to-face support groups at locations across NSW and 39 online groups, with 1,810 visits across these sessions.
- Our 55 trained volunteers gave 1,115 hours of their time to facilitating the support groups.
- We began our collaboration with Mental Health Carers NSW in resourcing their phone line in a year-long trial.
- In September 2019, we held a public forum on anxiety in Queanbeyan with 51 attendees, although we were unable to hold more due to bushfires, flooding and COVID-19 restrictions.
- We responded to the impacts of bushfires and COVID-19 on children through adding additional information to our Small Steps sessions about childhood anxiety.
- We held 58 face-to-face Small Steps seminars and 32 online Small Steps webinars using Zoom, reaching a total of 2,038 people.
- These Small Steps sessions were attended by 160 teachers and 1,238 parents face-to-face, and 610 people online, with attendees from every state in Australia, as well as attendees from Spain, UK, Portugal, USA and Singapore.
- In October 2019, the Small Steps and Anxiety Educator presented a Small Steps session for Coca Cola staff, with 35 attendees in the room plus additional online attendees around their North Sydney and New Zealand offices.
- A new WayAhead Workplaces member was profiled in our Members Spotlight each month in direct response to member feedback about wanting to know more about who our members are.
- We refreshed our annual 10 Tips to Stress Less in the Holidays, for the 2019/20 Summer holidays.
- We developed a Natural Disaster Support page to support workplaces, a compilation of resources and services for with those affected by the 2019/2020 droughts, bushfires and floods in NSW and Queensland.
- We also developed a Workplace Wellbeing and COVID-19 Support page, which covers mental health and social connection, financial wellness, small business, working from home, and WHS, and shares useful webinars, podcasts and short courses.

We recognise the importance of good mental health and wellbeing in our communities

WayAhead leads a number of initiatives that encourage conversations around good mental health and wellbeing in our communities. These include Mental Health Month, the Mental Health Matters Awards, and the WayAhead Workplaces program.

What we did this year:

- We awarded \$35,000 in grants to 48 Mental Health Month projects across the state in 5 categories (General, Youth, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTIQ+)
- Events sponsored through our grants program reached approximately 14,000 individuals across the state during Mental Health Month.
- We mailed out 23,000 Mental Health Month printed resources across NSW to community groups, workplaces and health and other service providers.
- On the 27th of September 2019, we hosted 175 people, including special guests the Hon. Bronnie Taylor MLC, NSW Minister for Mental Health, and the NSW Mental Health Commissioner, Catherine Lourey, at a luncheon to celebrate the winners of the Mental Health Matters Awards winners and launch Mental Health Month 2019.
- Increased public relations surrounding the Mental Health Matters Awards also meant that we reached new audiences through increased media coverage across a range of outlets.



Gunida Gunyah Aboriginal Corporation wins state award for Warrangal Dhiyan program

<https://www.nvi.com.au/story/6405374/hard-work-pays-off-for-gunida-gunyah-family-support-workers/>



Clair Vernon, CEO Jewish Care making mental health better in NSW

<https://www.sbs.com.au/language/english/audio/clair-vernon-ceo-jewish-care-making-mental-health-better-in-nsw>



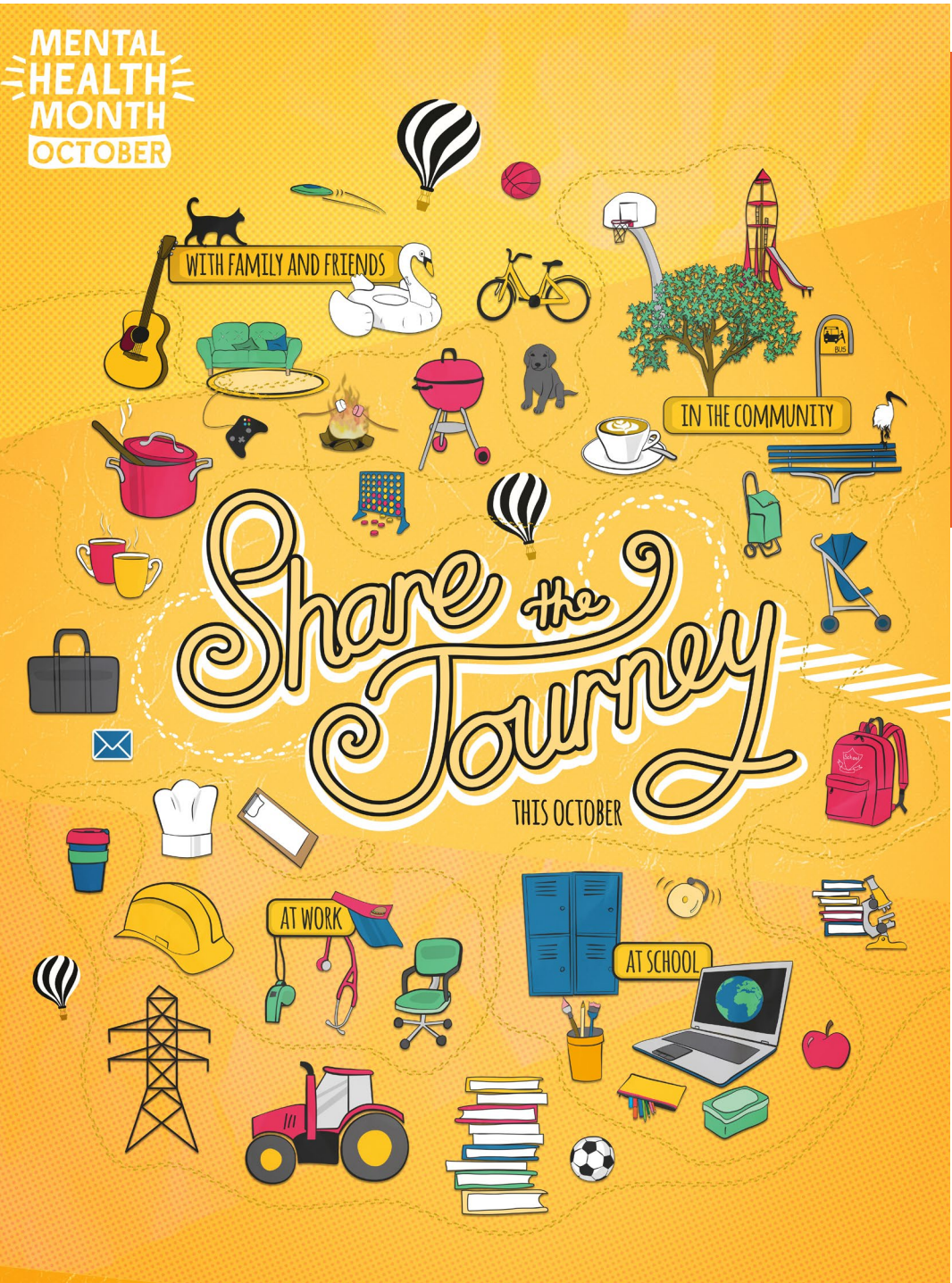
Fling, Rainbow Wave Festival announced as winners for 2019 Mental Matters Awards

<https://www.begadistrictnews.com.au/story/6409726/fling-rainbow-wave-festival-announced-as-winners-for-2019-mental-matters-awards/>



A yarn with Jane Bender, CEO of Gunida Gunyah Aboriginal Corporation

<https://www.sbs.com.au/language/english/audio/a-yarn-with-jane-bender-ceo-of-gunida-gunyah-aboriginal-corporation>



The 2019 Mental Health Month theme ‘Share the Journey’ is all about ways we can connect with others, both for our own health and wellbeing, as well as theirs.

76% of respondents to our Mental Health Month Survey reported that the campaign message, **Share the Journey,** influenced the way they think about social connections

71% report they intend to **do something to improve social connection** as a result of the Share the Journey campaign messaging.



Mental Health Matters Awards Winners 2019

Mental Health Matters Youth Award

FLING Physical Theatre for "My Black Dog"

Bega Valley



https://youtu.be/e1jHg_BHtnM

Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Award

Warranggal Dhiyan (Strong Families) program, Gunida Gonyah Aboriginal Corporation

Gunnedah



<https://youtu.be/5P5OHWZHjhg>

NSW Mental Health Commissioner's Community Champion Award

Dr Jonathon Ho

Wagga Wagga

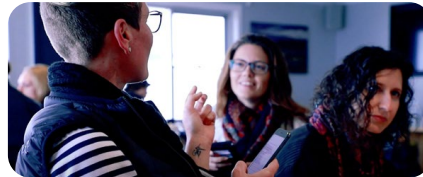


<https://youtu.be/rliM2f01uE>

Workplace Wellbeing Award – Sponsored by WayAhead Workplaces

The Freelance Jungle

Windang/National

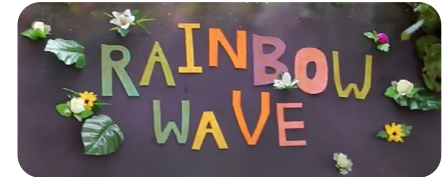


<https://youtu.be/KtF-CBG9Ars>

Mental Health Matters Rainbow Inclusion Award – Sponsored by ACON

Rainbow Waves Festival Committee, Pambula Mental Health Service

Bega Valley

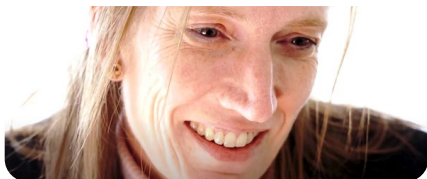


https://youtu.be/L_fN2LQxwE

Leadership through Lived Experience Award

FND Australia Support Services Incorporated

Sydney/National



<https://youtu.be/19l4TnPiaKw>

Mental Health Matters Community Initiative Award

Jewish Suicide Prevention Strategy, JewishCare NSW

Sydney



<https://youtu.be/uBZMyxFLkHc>

Outstanding Achievement in Mental Health Promotion Award

Mission Australia, Connections Program – Reducing Loneliness in Far West NSW

Broken Hill



<https://youtu.be/ise7xhMdW00>

We work collaboratively to improve the lives of those with lived experience

During 2019-20, WayAhead placed significant focus on ensuring the mental health and wellbeing needs of people in NSW were represented through political advocacy. We continued to deliver our pioneering WayAhead Workplaces program, and also worked with various partners to inform our work and reach new audiences.

What we did this year:

- Following the NSW state election, we wrote to all elected members of parliament to inform them of our work and invite them to meet to discuss the mental health and wellbeing needs of their electorates, resulting in dozens of meetings with MPs and consistent relationship-building with the Minister, Shadow Minister, and mental health spokespeople across parties.
- We also met with NSW federal members of parliament and senators at Parliament House, Canberra.
- We provided a submission to the Productivity Commission into Mental Health, focussing on four key areas: ensuring future mental health systems are based on lived experience; early intervention and prevention; workplaces; and mental health workforce.
- Our Workplaces Lead continued on as part of the SafeWork NSW Workplace Mental Health Program Reference Group, consulting on program content, marketing, and future developments.

91% of respondents to the 2019 Annual WayAhead Workplaces Members' Survey reported they had **better access to workplace health and wellbeing information and resources** as a result of their membership

- We provided a submission on the Second Exposure Draft of Religious Discrimination that welcomed legislative efforts to remove discrimination, including religious discrimination, with the caveat that it not have any adverse impacts on those living with mental ill health and other groups that experience discrimination, both historically and currently.
- The Workplaces Lead also continued to co-host and facilitate the NSW Workplace Mental Health Network group with Beyond Blue, made up of 13 key stakeholders to improve sector communication and working partnerships.

Nearly **85%** of respondents reported **applying knowledge or making changes to their work environment**

as a result of being a Workplaces member, including new ideas or techniques, launching a new health and wellbeing initiative, and sharing information about health and wellbeing at team meetings

85% of respondents **have promoted WayAhead Workplaces**

to others, including potential members, people in their own organisation, and personal contacts

- We held quarterly WayAhead Workplaces meetings for our 102 member organisations and individuals, and although we couldn't hold our key Annual Forum due to COVID-19, our November 2019 meetings had the biggest attendance ever, with 79 attendees at our Sydney meeting and 34 attendees at our Brisbane meeting.
- We collaborated with PANDA and NSW Health to co-design and deliver peer advocacy training to people with lived experiences of perinatal mental health issues, using co-design principles, with a WayAhead staff member providing input as the lived experience consultant.
- We were involved in several co-design activities, including focus-groups for the 2020-2023 Mental Health Month theme, and the Reimagine Today website resource co-design process with the Mental Health Coordinating Council and the National LGBTI Health Alliance.

- We worked with the Department of Premier and Cabinet's NDIS Reform Group to take calls related to the restrictive practices authorisation consultation in July 2019, answering people's questions and assisting those who found it difficult to complete their online survey.

“Connection to understanding people who care and help ... a life saving service”

Support group participant

Our partnerships

We work across many initiatives with a number of partners, without whom we would not be able to undertake our work for better mental health for all.



Mental Health Commission
of New South Wales



SANE AUSTRALIA



mieact
mental health & well-being
education & training providers



MAD MUSIC
the sound of empathy



MAD Pride



WayAhead are also members of:

- Australian Health Promotion Association
- Ending Loneliness Together
- Mental Health Australia
- Mental Health Coordinating Council
- NCOSS
- Our Community

Our people

Our staff are our most important assets, with decades of experience among them. Many have dedicated their working lives to better mental health and wellbeing for all, through working for WayAhead.

We have a number of initiatives that support our staff, including our Employee Assistance Program, wellbeing initiatives, and Indigenous cultural awareness training through Your Mob Learning.

What we did this year:

- Our Employment Assistance Program provider was changed to Uprise, an internet- and phone-based service that provides wellbeing learning modules, access to coaching calls and monthly webinars on wellbeing topics.
- We continued to deliver a daily half-hour wellbeing allowance, with staff logging 358 hours of wellbeing activities, the most popular of which were walking, gardening, working out and trivia.
- A number of activities were also led by staff, including mindfulness meditation, office gardening club, jigsaw puzzles and riddles, and our educational Lunch & Learn series.
- Monthly birthday celebrations, trivia, and drinks & nibbles consistently well attended by staff, with trivia shifting to a fortnightly online event once everyone began working remotely.

- We also held an end-of-year celebration in the office with a decorating contest, scavenger hunt, and a donation to the NSW Rural Fire Service, with staff encouraged to “Share your celebration” through dress, music and food, following on the 2019 Mental Health Month theme, “Share the journey”.
- Flu shots were also provided for staff who wanted one.

Staff

CEO

Elizabeth Priestley

Senior Manager

(until January 2020)

Marge Jackson

Mental Health Promotion Officer

Asha Zappa

Anxiety Support Group Program Lead

Rachel Flint

Understanding Anxiety Programs Assistant

Melanie Adams

Event Management & Understanding

Anxiety Program Support

Caryn Shipp

Small Steps and Anxiety Educator

Julie Leitch

Small Steps Program Facilitator

Simon Alaba

Dominique Sherley

Merrick Powell

Membership and Information Officer

Terri Marsh

Information Officer

Paul Leonard

Project Assistant – Mental Health

Information (until May 2020)

Sanju Gangoli

Corporate Affairs Manager

Ben Graham

WayAhead Workplaces Program Lead

(until June 2020)

Sharon Leadbetter

WayAhead Workplaces Program Officer

Lynley Hurst

Graphic Designer

Leanne Kelly

Writer

Tasnim Hossain

Collective Purpose (CP) General Manager

Matthew Stanley

CP HR Support Coordinator

Cyril O'Connor

CP Hub Coordinator (until August 2019)

Ashleigh Morton

CP Hub Administration Officer

Tasmin Hill

Anxiety Disorders Support & Information

Officer (until October 2019) and CP Hub

Assistant

Luke McGrath

CP Accountant

Supun Mundigala

CP Accounts Assistant

Vera Velevska

CP Assistant Accountant (until October

2019)

Felicia Ng



Volunteers

- Michela Folli
 - Luke McGrath
 - Voula Sofiou
- Along with our many dedicated volunteer support group facilitators

Students

- Zoe Carroll
- Sabrina Haddad
- Peter Ju
- Amy Lin
- Ogechukwu Maduka (Blessing)
- Carolyn Nguyen
- Adepeju Onamusi (PJ)
- Amelia Parsonage
- Cedar Smith
- Michael Taftt

“[I value] feeling like you’ve been able to truly support people through what may be their toughest times.”

Volunteer support group facilitator

Anxiety Disorders Advisory Committee

- Frank Flannery
- A/Prof Meg Smith
- Prof. Lisa Lampe
- Prof. Rocco Crino
- Dr Ann Wignall
- Lisa Tran
- Luke McGrath
- Stephen Bourne
- Jenny Learmont
- Prof Ron Rapee

Board

Role	Board Member	Start/finish	Attendance at meetings
President	Dr Meg Smith OAM		■■■■■■■■■■
Chair Person	Sharyn McGee		■■■■■■■■■■
Treasurer	Don Murray		■■■■■■■■■■
Vice-Chairperson	Stephen Bourne		■■■■■■■■■■
General Members	David Harper		■■■■■■■■■ / /
	Pam Barker		■■■■■■■■■ / / /
	Ben Wymer	(from Nov 2019)	■■■■■■■
	Dr. Emma Sedlak	(from Nov 2019)	■■■■■■■
	Frank Flannery	(until Nov 2019)	■■■■■
	Prof. Viviana Wuthrich	(until Nov 2019)	■■■ /
	Linda Hurst	(until Nov 2019)	■■ / /



wayahead.org.au

WayAhead acknowledges and actively supports the culturally diverse community we work in. This includes recognising and working with the Indigenous community, the LGBTI community, multicultural Australia and people living with a mental health condition.



WayAhead is funded by NSW Ministry of Health

WayAhead is an ACNC registered Australian Charity and is endorsed by the Quality Improvement Council.



You can find the WayAhead 2020 Financial Report at

<https://wayahead.org.au/download/financial-report-2019-20>