



Kilkivan & District Community Care Assn Inc.

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Advocating for & providing care services and facilities on behalf of aged & disabled people in Kilkivan & districts.

President's Report to AGM 14.12.2022

Thank you all for attending the third AGM of Kilkivan & District Community Care Assn Inc – we have come a long way in 3 years!

In February 2020 we outlined to a well-attended public meeting in Kilkivan our ambitious concept for how residents could age well in this community instead of being forced to relocate when they became less-than-independent. It involved 4 items (community transport; better, more efficient in-home care; affordable & accessible rental accommodation; and a community hub building. We called this the *Rise & Shine Project* – not just a reference to a positive, empowering image but also a nod to a former name of Kilkivan township, named after a lucrative local gold mine.

In the almost 3 years since the unanimous endorsement of our plan at that meeting, it is pleasing to report that **we have now implemented two of the four elements.**

1. The community transport solution is the **KilkiVAN** which has been operating for more than a year now and has provided limited but important transport options across our target area of Kilkivan-Goomeri-Tansey-Woolooga. In the last year the KilkiVAN has travelled to Palmwoods, twice to the movies in Gympie, to Woolooga dining venues, shopping in Goomeri & Gympie, a chartered trip for mainly Goomeri residents to a quilt show in Gympie, bowls club charter, and, most recently, a shuttle service between Kilkivan & the Kilkivan Showgrounds to the Xmas carnival.

ABC Wide Bay covered the KilkiVAN in a story for both tv & radio; that package aired on ABC statewide television news on Sunday October 23, 2022 and garnered lots of positive responses.

There are now 4 accredited drivers so we anticipate being able to offer more services in 2023. Many thanks to the **Kilkivan Hotel** initiative of providing to the KilkiVAN half the takings from their Friday afternoon lucky draw – that donation is much appreciated.

2. After the frustrating reduction of support services by the large providers in the area due to Covid lockdowns & staffing challenges, K&DCCA decided in early 2022 to **partner with Trilogy Care** for 4 reasons: to improve efficiencies, to provide greater/better value support to local package holders, to stimulate local employment options, and to access an income stream for **Kilkivan Care** from Trilogy for providing local coordination services. The **Mable platform** provides most of the support workers to complete the arrangement.

Our first client was Hayden W. who, despite having been a Level 4 package holder with a large provider, was receiving far less support than he seemed entitled to on paper. Immediately the benefits of the Trilogy-Mable-Kilkivan Care model were apparent – more hours each & every week for domestic and social support, plus fortnightly gardening support is now being accessed. **In April**, when we were beginning the coordination, there were very clear, significant savings available to clients from the new model we'd embraced. Lynda Sempf, especially, and I had worked hard to establish a body of potential local clients so the estimates of potential income to Kilkivan Care could be delivered as early as possible. We co-hosted a very successful launch on May 5, 2022 of our care coordination arrangement with both Trilogy and Mable, and were delighted to have both **James Whitelaw** (the Trilogy founder) and **Peter Scutt**, one of the owners of Mable, at the launch. A **3-minute video package** of the evening filmed and edited by Cameron Douglas of Douglas Media has had over 80,000 views on the Trilogy Facebook page and can be watched on our YouTube channel.

However, external economic and other factors have squeezed the expected margins somewhat in the in-home care situation: higher (but entirely fair, given the sudden fuel price & other cost of living rises) hourly rates than anticipated by Mable workers; the policy change by the Federal government which saw the problematic CHSP funding extended for a further 12 months

which meant that RAS assessors channelled clients away from an aged care package to the almost non-existent CHSP “service” in our target area; and a slow and often “under-assessed” flow of packages to the long-suffering clients who were desperate for support.

The **workload** for this part of our package is considerable. There can sometimes be 9 - 12 months of unfunded contact/meetings with potential clients before any coordination fees are received by Kilkivan Care, and as with any new, responsive system, Trilogy has continued to tweak its practices & procedures - which has inadvertently added to the workload for us. Additionally, local seniors did not or could not know what help was funded and what was not – they were just desperate for help so they could remain in their homes. They touch base with us regularly while they are waiting. And understandably, the workload doesn’t stop when our office is closed – because we are dealing with very human elements in a delicately-balanced but complex arrangement between government agencies, provider Trilogy Care, Mable support workers, and ageing clients with evolving needs, things requiring our attention happen at all hours!

Our Secretary Sally Evans took time off her paid RN work to help set up the administrative processes required particularly by the Kilkivan Care operation. We then contracted with another RN, **Sylvia McLoughlin** who is the part-time, paid **Coordinator** of Kilkivan Care. Sylvia’s nursing experience and her passion for helping with dementia awareness has made her a great fit for our Kilkivan Care operations. She has now been joined by another part-time, paid contractor, **Sandy Brenton** who is our **Administrator**.

Elements 3 and 4 of the Rise and Shine concept have yet to be developed – they are the expensive infrastructure parts that we hope to build on the Church Street block which Gympie Regional Council has indicated is available for that use, subject to a compelling feasibility study and concept design. We have had to just pause the intention to proceed with that – it is a lot of money for K&DCCAI to outlay when there is no guarantee of acceptable land tenure arrangements. However, we continue to explore the possibilities whenever time allows.

Two other elements underpin the entire Rise & Shine Project: the Kilkivan & District Kickstart **newsletter and the Seniors’ Social Hub**. The free monthly newsletter content is provided mainly by me, with advertising support from Lynda Sempf and formatting by Anneliese Bambling. So far the newsletter has

been a cost-neutral or profitable initiative. 21 editions have been published and it is a very effective vehicle for promoting and explaining our project elements. However, due to the recent workload of the overall project for the key volunteers, a decision to miss the January 2023 edition has been made. All editions are available on our website. And we are very grateful to the stapling efforts of octogenarian Judy Farrow each month.

Seniors' Social Hub continues to draw great attendances, with sometimes in excess of 25 persons gathering each fortnight to chat, be informed by guest speakers or participate in activities. Regular attendees from Woolooga and Goomeri help to ensure that our activities are incidentally promoted across the entire target area. Our December 2022 Xmas Party session unveiled the newly-purchased Bingo kit – it will be regularly used at the Hub as well as at the 2023 fund-raising bingo sessions at the Bowls Club, commencing on January 21, 2023. Of course, the stellar **catering provided by Marg Denton** for Hub sessions and other activities is a very significant drawcard.

Two younger members of the team deserve special recognition. **Heidi Dunham** does a wonderful job of managing our Facebook page which now has 220 followers, up from 100 in early May. **Anneliese Bambling** not only expertly formats the newsletter but also manages our website. These tasks require IT skills, dedication and commitment, and Heidi and Anneliese are always cheerful and tolerant of sometimes haphazard timeframes and requests.

Additionally, K&DCCAI is very fortunate to have several other committed volunteers who work to **raise funds** regularly to bolster our project. Jan Ferguson, Jo Edwards, and Robyn Ditton lead these efforts, and the generosity of craftspeople Di Wade, Kerry Jordan, Erin Barkle and others has also helped enormously. Thanks also go to photographer Graeme Toft and the 19 over-80-year-olds who agreed to appear in the ***Rising & Shining around Kilkivan black & white fund-raising calendar***.

We have also been blessed to have both anonymous donations from locals as well as **donations** from other organizations, especially **Goomeri Lions Club**, which always lift our morale and remind us of the big picture. We are also absolutely chuffed that **90-year-old Athol Bevan**, who lives quite independently near Kilkivan, produces wonderful handmade replica boats – only this morning he donated another 4 boats to us for fund-raising purposes!

We have also received **4 grants** in the last year, and I commend the work of outgoing Secretary Sally Evans in accessing a total of \$14,000 in two grants. One allowed us to set up our office with furniture, a laptop printer, phones, etc, while the other will fund 22 visits to Goomeri in 2023 in order to provide support for seniors wishing to access aged care packages.

Local solicitor **John Joyce** provided much-needed, pro-bono expertise to K&DCCAI to progress our applications for both charity and DGR status. As of July this year, donors to our organization can have the benefit of tax-deductibility.

And speaking of money, we are blessed to have an **outstanding Treasurer** in **Lynda Sempf** who somehow keeps excellent records even when she is almost “mobbed” by people buying tickets, calendars, etc. Of course, her integrity, honesty and depth of understanding of the overall project are key to this role. I certainly could not have continued in my role without Lynda’s unwavering support and advice, especially this year – she is the most wonderful friend and colleague in this project and we all owe her an enormous debt for the commitment she has shown.

K&DCCAI really appreciates the **practical support provided by Gympie Regional Council in providing us with office space at 26 Bligh Street**. Bonnie and her team have made us feel very welcome which has been greatly appreciated.

The last 12 months have included some **really challenging times** for all those in the management group as we grappled with the disappointment of not being able to use the fire shed at 22 Bligh Street for our office and gathering space, and as we struggled with the relentless workload of this important work. We have maintained a reasonably high profile in an effort to keep our project in the public eye – that helps attract new clients to Kilkivan Care but also gives confidence to existing package holders that our project is well-regarded. To that end, as President I spoke recently at a **Symposium on Healthy Ageing & Community Care at the Gympie Campus of the Uni of the Sunshine Coast** – I was invited to explain our Rise & Shine project to an audience of mainly academics and some community workers. Lynda Sempf and Sandy Brenton also attended and we met some useful contacts who showed keen interest in our activities. In 2023 K&DCCAI is excited to be partnering with UniSC on a healthy ageing pilot project with a focus on preventing dementia.

Local Mable workers have provided an important element in the success of Kilkivan Care's package coordination – they have been a terrific group to work with and are greatly valued by the clients receiving their support. We were therefore really delighted to be offered the opportunity to facilitate the **first session of a pilot, Mable-funded upskilling program for support workers** and others – that intense training occurred earlier this week. This initiative also allows us to publicly demonstrate our strong support for a well-trained workforce in the community care context, thus reassuring clients and families.

Of course, being involved in this ageing space brings the sadness associated with the inevitable passing of valued community members. For us **the loss of three people weighs heavily**: Barry Wilkinson who was a package holder; Barry Bambling, who was photographed for the calendar; and Winston Coates who, when he was taken to hospital and then into residential care in Brisbane, was Kilkivan's oldest resident. We send our condolences to their families.

Thank you to all members, local supporters and others from beyond our community for all the support and practical help – we on your management team all believe this is a very important project but we **wish there was a better-funded and better-supported pathway** to completing the Rise & Shine Ageing-in-place Project. However, we will persist...thank you.

Rosie Fitzgerald, President of K&DCCAI

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