mycommunity
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Community Information Support Services
Annual Report - 2013

We provide a dynamic digital library that gives easy access to community information for everyone.

2013 Annual Report

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Contact Community Information Support Services Ltd
1300 762 515

2013 – The year in numbers

2   new Community Information Support Services staff

23   new data sets added to My Community Directory

82   outlets purchased MCD Ultimate Memberships

26%   of MCD visitors returned after their first visit

223   people attended workshops or events run by CISS

1598   people contacted listings through the MCD website

3450   hours volunteered with CISS

401,733   unique visitors to My Community Directory

542,456   visits to My Community Directory

1,204,551   pages listing pages were viewed

Message from the Directors

2013 has seen Community Information Support Services emerge as a major contributor to the community services sector –a primary source of information about the delivery of services in Queensland.

The value of this information cannot be underestimated. Every day it helps thousands of people to get the service they need. It saves enormous amounts of time for workers and carers.

Information is the grease that allows good decisions and choices to be made. We know how much the commercial world is willing to spend on advertising to present their brand to consumers. In contrast, the community sector has always been hampered by an inability to get the word out to potential users because marketing and advertising budgets are negligible. Understandably, organisations want to spend every dollar possible on delivery of services.

But increasingly we are moving to a user-choice system – away from a system where governments funded organisations who then recruited the recipients. To increase competition and market forces, governments are choosing to allocate funds directly to the client – and give them the responsibility of finding the most suitable service.

While this has many benefits for some clients – and puts fewer restrictions on them regarding the type of support they can purchase, it is a big ask for the most vulnerable. Many clients and their carers have limited knowledge of what there is to offer. Also, experienced community service workers do not have contacts and knowledge outside of their own expertise – so they also rely on standard tools of internet search.

Fortunately the digital age means that we can now organise and present data in ways that make it much more accessible than previously. Whereas an ordinary Google Search depends on the hierarchy of the data and web presence of organisations, our main digital library, My Community Directory, has collected a much more comprehensive list of organisations across the whole array of the community – including small local clubs, churches and self-help groups.

The Directors congratulates the staff for their clever, innovative use of leading edge technology and their continued dedication to create tools of enormous value to the community services sector. As Directors would also like to thank our many partners who have supported and encouraged our efforts to make it easier for community services sector workers, volunteers and service users to find the information they need.

Message from the Executive Director

Community Information Support Services was established in 2010 to create a strong vehicle for high quality community information in order to get better outcomes across Australia through better knowledge and use of resources. As a not-for-profit social enterprise we are able to provide access to information through *My Community Directory*, an online collection of local data. The capacity and scope of *My Community Directory* continues to grow.

In the past year we have made significant progress, achieving our registration with the Australian Charity and Not–for-profit Commission –an important recognition of our contribution.

We have also become a member of the Australian Library and Information Association. We are committed to providing a comprehensive digital library of community information to the Australian public, governments and community organisations.

Since the launch of our updated member information system in August 2013, the number of community organisation members has grown rapidly to include over 50 locations utilising paid membership of our digital library. We also have local government councils, representing a third of the Queensland population, using the library as their main source of community information.

As a social enterprise, we are passionate about encouraging the growth of social enterprise in Australia and participated in the innovative "Social Marketplace" event in Sydney. This event organised by the Centre for Social Impact, raised awareness amongst the Private Sector of the benefits and opportunities that can be presented by assisting social enterprises such as Community Information Support Services to provide sustainable outcomes for the community with or without government support.

Community Information Support Services has continued its training and education program with the *Information is Power* series of breakfasts and workshops. These have shown executives and staff of community organisations how to make the best use of information sources both in *My Community Directory* and in other data library collections.

We have a challenging business development plan – with many exciting ideas for applications and improvements, not least of which is to expand across Australia by 2016. As we are working with the sector, the library will expand to include practical tools, as well as links to important reports and research related to the community sector.
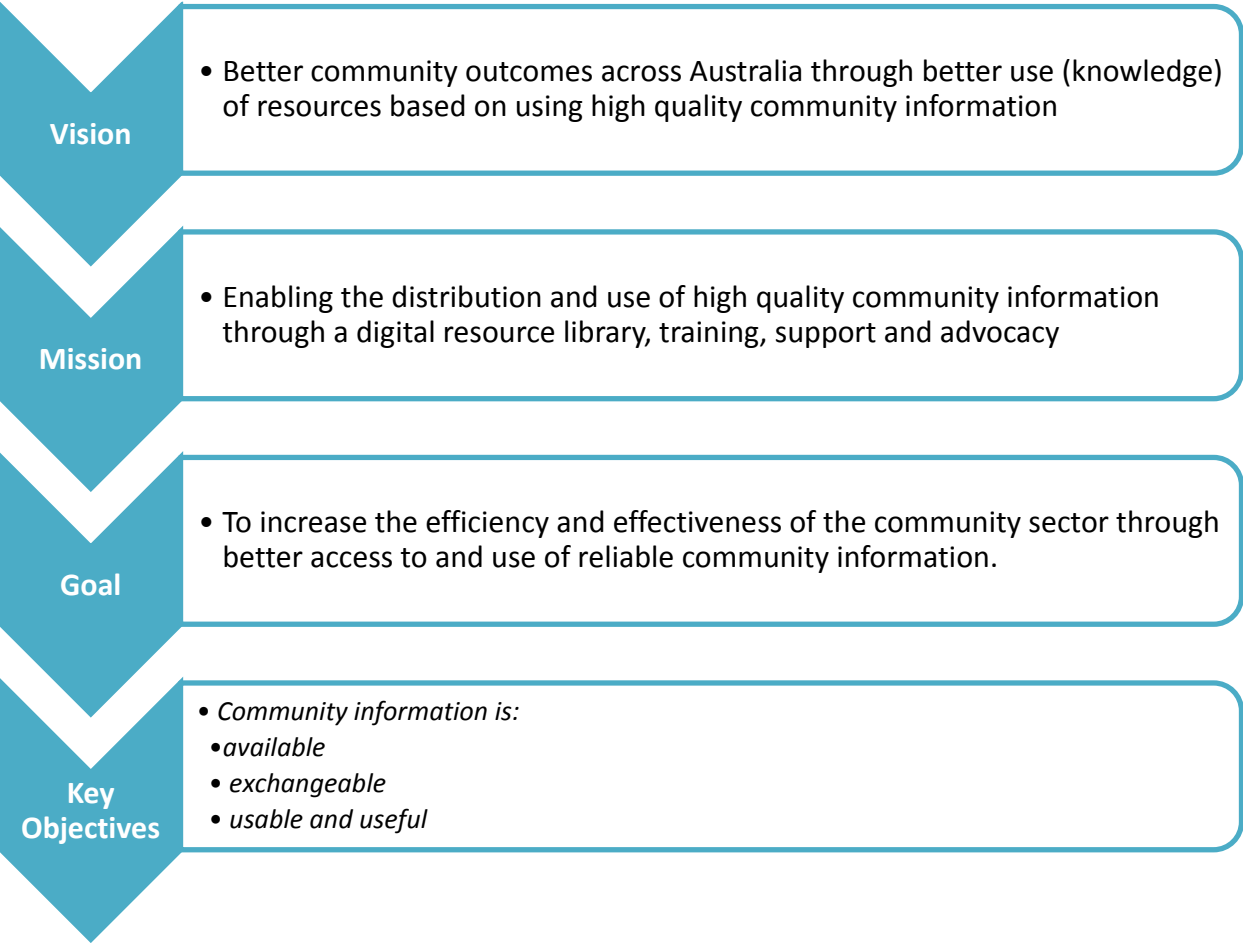
Providing a central information resource for community information is a key component in improving outcomes for disadvantaged Australians and Community Information Support Services is proud to be a leader in the field.

Regards

Brentyn Parkin, Executive Director

Our Strategic Plan

Vision
- Better community outcomes across Australia through better use (knowledge) of resources based on using high quality community information

Mission
- Enabling the distribution and use of high quality community information through a digital resource library, training, support and advocacy

Goal
- To increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the community sector through better access to and use of reliable community information.

Key Objectives
- *Community information is:*
- *available*
- *exchangeable*
- *usable and useful*

Our Target:

By 2020 – every Australian every month will access community information to meet their needs and interests.

Our Services:

High quality digital information library and resources, training, support, advocacy and leadership to increase effective and efficient data use in the community sector

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Community Information Support Services

Directors

Dr Marion Norton, *Director*
Dr Norton has developed several key evaluation tools and has made a significant contribution to the development of the Australian Community Data Standards. Dr Marion Norton has worked for more than twenty years in the government and community sectors in relation to delivery of community services.
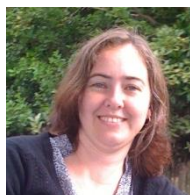
Cathy Wilson, *Director*
Cathy Wilson is the Chief Executive Officer of a not for profit organisation, leading a team of staff and volunteers to provide independent living, respite, recreation, sport and community based services for people with an intellectual disability. Cathy has a Bachelor of Recreation Management (majors in Sport Management, Outdoor Recreation and Adaptive Recreation).

Brentyn Parkin, *Executive Director*
Brentyn has worked in State Government, for Community Sector organisations in Australia and overseas and currently runs a social enterprise. With over 15 years' experience working with communities, he is passionate about assisting community organisations, Government and business to create social outcomes that make a difference.

Advisors

Monica Bradley, *Advisor*
Monica is an engaging talent with exceptional strategy and global advisory experience. She recently returned to Brisbane after impressive career in US and Middle East. Monica is a sought-after international advisor, mentor and leader, who solves complex problems and delivers sustainable results.

Lisa Bundesen, *Advisor*
Lisa is a Chartered Accountant with over 24 years' experience in Forensic Accounting. She has spent many years working with Not-for-Profits to reduce the risk of fraud and if fraud does occur, to investigate what has happened and work with the organisation to tighten controls and processes.

Robin Dick, *Advisor*
Robin Dick passions are innovation/entrepreneurship, strategy, fundraising and helping to build strong, sustainable communities. Robin is experienced in working with the private, public, community and tertiary education sectors and delivering positive social and economic outcomes for employers and clients.

2013 Highlights

Community Information Support Services began providing My Community Directory to provide a more comprehensive suite of information and library services to the Australian community. Moved office to the Maida Lilley Centre Fortitude Valley, with the assistance of Brisbane City Council, and took over the hiring of rooms in the Centre.

Making information available
- Access My Community Project – improving access to information for people with an intellectual disability living in Brisbane. The Access My Community Project was nominated as a finalist in the Premier's Open Data Awards.
- Access All Areas project, providing the potential for organisations in My Community Directory to be self-accredited as "culturally competent" to provide services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Piloted My Community Diary for information and access to local community events and activities across Queensland, with data obtained from the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse and other sources.
- The addition of several key Community organisations in Queensland as paid members of My Community Directory since the platform upgrade.

Making information usable and useful
- Welcomed Toowoomba Regional Council as a member of My Community Directory. Through extensive work with Council staff and the local community, My Community Directory now provides a significantly improved community information resource to the broader Toowoomba region.
- Significant upgrades to the My Community Directory platform, including significant improvements in functionality and usefulness for Council and Community organisation members.
- Successful delivery of the Healthy Places information program in Northern Territory

Making information exchangeable
- Further development of the Australian Community Data Standards to improve the way that information is stored and accessed by Australian Community organisations.
- The successful "Co-Creating stronger Social and Community Outcomes in Regional Queensland" workshop, jointly hosted with Community Central and Energising Communities, provided a unique opportunity for Community Organisations, Local Government, Social Planners and the Resources sector to discuss ways that they can collaborate to provide improved social services in Regional communities.
- The Information is Power series of workshops provided community organisations the opportunity to look more closely at how they currently use data to inform their practice, and how they could improve both their business and outcomes for their clients through better information management.

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Using Community Information
My Community Directory

My Community Directory is a digital library containing information from many different sources. Information source and ownership is traced, monitored, maintained and made available to members and displayed and made freely accessible to the public.

My Community Directory is experiencing significant growth, with a 20% increase in the number of organisations registered in the first half of 2013. My Community Directory now contains

- Access to 34 specific datasets with information sourced from a variety of locations
- Approx. 46,000 visits per month from the public
- Approx. 102,000 page views per month
- 9,300+ services listed
- 6,500+ locations
- 3,500+ organisations
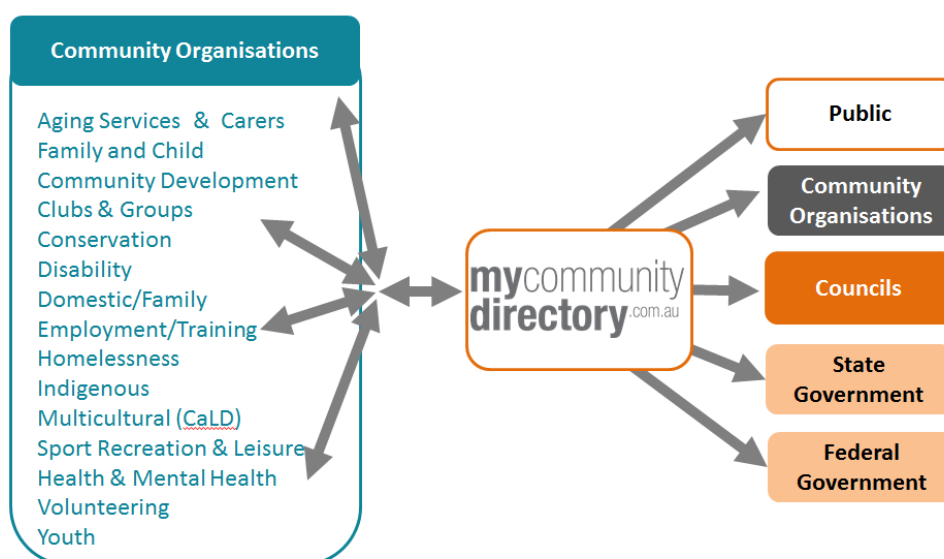
Like a physical library, access to information is provided according to membership type and is:

An organised collection
My Community Directory collects and organises information and monitors it for changes and updates

Made available to a defined community
My Community Directory is accessible to the public through the internet for free – Access through the web makes it accessible locally, nationally and globally. Different membership types allow access to information for specific, relevant purposes.

Reference or borrowing

As part of the collection, My Community Directory collects information for the Australian Community Services Sector – this is the largest single set of verified Community Sector data currently available on Queensland services, and will ultimately provide information on services Australia-wide as we provide the information resource in other states. This data has been used in commission reports, research reports and is a recognised reference in Queensland.

A Digital Collection

My Community Directory has focused on a virtual collection to make it accessible to all.

- These sources have been collated from:
- National data (e.g. the National Toilet Register)
- State data (e.g. Queensland Government, Department of Education)
- Local data (e.g. Council based facilities and services)
- Private data
- Collected data – information provided by individual organisations

My Community Diary

In 2013, Community Information Support Services pioneered the development of My Community Diary in response to requests from Councils, Community organisations and the public for the need to access up to date information on local events and activities that they, their clients and residents can access.

My Community Diary contains 4 major categories of information:

• Public Events
• Community Sector Interagency meetings
• Community Sector training events
• Local Clubs and Groups

Exchanging Community Information
Australian Community Data Standard

The Australian Community Data Standard project is to establish the underpinning standards of information exchange for the community sector.

The project will develop a common data platform for the community sector to use for client transactions, referral, public information, industry statistics, marketing, research, evaluation and policy development.

The Australian Community Data Standard continues to gather momentum with a group of committed advisors and volunteers so far committing around 2000 hours of equivalent expertise to the development of the Standard.

There is interest from Peak Bodies and Organisations operating across the Eastern Seaboard in promoting and utilising the standard to streamline the way that they store and distribute information about their business.

In 2014 there are plans to continue the promotion and development of the Australian Community Data Standard once an appropriate source of funding is secured.

Access My Community Project

Access My Community is a landmark project for disabled people in Queensland and Australia.

By combining information from the Brisbane Community Directory with other "Open" Information sources, we have created a powerful online mapping tool that is aimed at giving individuals who have difficulty reading, writing, typing or using a computer the ability to find local services and activities that interest them either independently or with minimal outside assistance.

Proudly supported by Brisbane City Council, this project was developed in conjunction with clients, parents and staff of Westside Community Services, as well as feedback from a number of Disabilities, Sport, Education, Health and Employment agencies across Queensland.

Community Information Support Services were very excited for "Access My Community" to be nominated as a Finalist for the Premier's Open Data Awards in 2013.

The layout of the "Access My Community" online tool
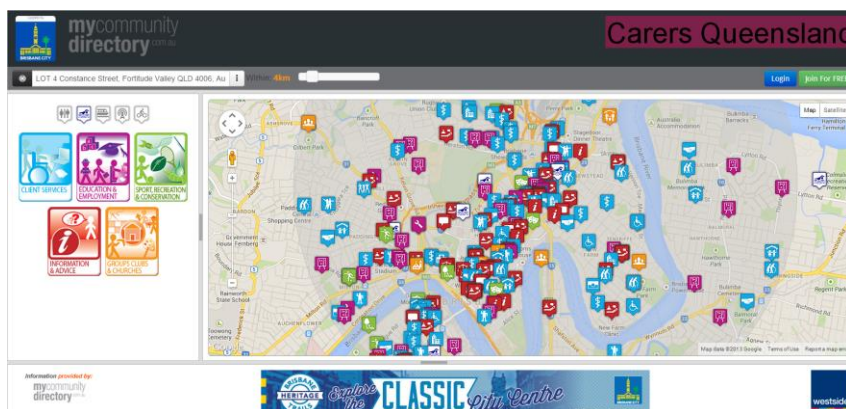
Partners, Supporters and Funding Bodies

Thank you to all of our Donors, Supporters and Funding bodies throughout 2013.

Council Members

Banana Regional Council
Brisbane City Council
Central Highlands Regional Council
Toowoomba Regional Council
Tablelands Regional Council
Whitsunday Regional Council
Mount Isa City Council

Community Organisation Members

Bowen Flexi Care
Busy at Work
FSG Australia
HELP Enterprises
Lifestream Foundation
MICAH Projects
Westside Community Services

Some of our supporters who worked with us

Australian Evaluations Society
Australian Library and Information Association
Bear Universe
Community Central
Energising Communities
Regional Development Australia – Brisbane
School for Social Entrepreneurs

And our corporate supports who have provided valuable advice and support!

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