



WARM BLANKETS FOR EVERYONE

Latest News & Updates

DEC 2024



OPENING ADDRESS

Hello & Merry Christmas to all Warm Blankets volunteers,

Warm Blankets for Everyone continues to grow both in volunteer numbers and outreach into the community. It's exciting to receive feedback when speaking to outsiders, that many have 'heard of' Warm Blankets For Everyone.

The past few months have been busy, with WBFE represented at Newcastle Business Club, at the Newcastle Volunteers Awards and the Christ Church Cathedral Outreach Program 40-year Anniversary event. Di, Dave and I have done another couple of speaking engagements and have picked up some volunteers. We also come home from these events with a carload of donated fabrics and blankets.

Kevin and Ian have done several trips to the Northern Territory and western N.S.W. this year. WBFE supports these trips with items which are donated to us. There is a list at the workshop of those goods which WBFE accepts. No other goods please. Recently I had a volunteer 'claim' an older style grey blanket, which she is going to send to her sister for the camels in Wilpena Pound. The too small blankets go to local pre-schools and the Vet's. This is great recycling.

I would like to thank those many organisations who support us throughout the year. A special call out to Quirky Quilters, Women on Wednesday (WOW) and Creating for Charity. Also, the many donations we receive from local businesses for the hampers and prizes at our various fundraising events, without this support our events would not be the wonderful success they are.

Thank you so much to all the volunteers for your support and enthusiasm. It never ceases to amaze me that it is only just 5 years since we started with 2 volunteers and now, we have 125. The effort this year in being able to supply 3,500 blankets, over 700 more than last year, to the ever-increasing number of people in desperate need of support is amazing.

I do hope that you all enjoy your break over the summer. For those who are keen to pick up some work to 'play with' during those hot days, there are packs all ready. – just give me a call.

A very Merry Christmas and Happy New year to all!

Sue Bardsley
Co-founder/Chairperson
Warm Blankets For Everyone

DISTRIBUTIONS (Di Ebert)

Well it's been another very big year for the Distribution Team!

Since 1 February this year we have supplied **3,500 blankets** and there are still some deliveries to come. So far this is around 700 more than this time last year.

The number is made up of 2,629 Fleece backed blankets, 146 woollen blankets & 725 crochet / knitted blankets. In addition to the blankets we have provided 709 Beanies, 110 Gloves & 248 Scarfs, 32 Jumpers & Shawls and 24 pairs of socks.

Teams have “pinned” some 2,100 blankets in workshop sessions this year. This is a magnificent effort for all those involved.

Following are the numbers of blankets provided to some of the main charities that benefit from the wonderful work of our volunteers:

- We Care Connect Wyong – 841
- We Care Connect Thornton - 303
- Food not Bombs – 484
- Christ Church Cathedral - 272
- Community of Hope - 41
- Mum’s Cottage – 142
- Hope St Baptist Care - 119
- Macquarie Life Church – 78
- East Lakes Family Support - 110
- Zara’s House - 376
- Allambi Youth - 20
- STRAS Belmont Hospital (Short term residential accommodation service) – 77
- WHO’s – We Help Ourselves Men & Women’s Drug & Alcohol Rehabilitation Cessnock – 231
- Northern Territory Communities – 129

Again, I want to thank the wonderful delivery drivers who continue to give so readily of their time to make sure the deliveries are done. You are all an integral part of Warm Blankets and very much at the coal face of our organisation. Without you all we would not achieve all that we do.

Thank you everyone & have a very Merry Christmas and a well-deserved break!

FUNDRAISING REPORT (Rebecca Wett)

WBFE FUNDRAISING REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2024

Recapping on all the Fundraising events that the Fundraising Team has done this year.

In March we started the year with our **TAFE Dinner**. Attendees had to be limited to 30. The meals are always excellent and great value for a 3-course meal. We raised \$600. Next year we plan to do a TAFE luncheon for people who don’t like to go out in the evening

In March we organised a **Movie Matinee** at the Lake Cinemas Boolaroo. Lake Cinema was celebrating it’s 50th year’s birthday and screened the movie “Singing in the Rain” for us to watch. It was a great afternoon. It was a refreshing movie, with lots of amazing costumes, singing and dancing. They don’t make these kind of movies anymore. Included was a lunch pack with coffee or tea provided by the Cinema. The fundraising committee will plan a couple of Movie Matinees for next year. We raised \$1,500 on the day.

In May we had our **Mad Hatters Tea Party**. This was a very popular event. It was wonderful to see everyone come along in their decorated hats and costumes. It really set the scene for a great afternoon. We invited Beth Searles and the U3A Ukulele group to perform for us. They came dressed up in their Mad Hatters outfits. They played some great songs and everyone joined in, singing and bobbing along. This event raised over \$5,500. We have some exciting and fun events coming up next year. So please stay tuned.

A massive Thank You to Julie Farquhar’s Wednesday group. They decided they would help out the Fundraising Team this year and run an event. The **Ladle and Crust luncheon** was a very popular event with 91 people attending. Julie’s team did an amazing job. They supplied a variety of different soups with bread rolls. The bread rolls were donated by Bakers Delight. The desserts were

delicious, I could have gone back for seconds. The newspaper quiz was lots of fun and they had 42 prizes to give out. They did a fantastic job and raised \$4,690. I heard on the grapevine that they may be doing another fundraising event next year. That would be fabulous.

In September, Sue Bardsley organised a group of volunteers to run a stall at the **St Luke's Family Day** at Belmont. They raised \$280. The fundraising team will discuss if this is a viable event to do next year.

In November, we held our **Volunteers Christmas Luncheon** at St Luke's Uniting Church. We decided that this year we would combine our Volunteers Luncheon with our Christmas Luncheon. Holding both events together worked really well. We had 60 Volunteers turn up to a beautiful afternoon tea. We wanted to thank everyone for all their hard work throughout the year. Derryck Klarkowski from "We Care Connect" gave us a talk about how they are making a difference for children living in poverty in the Hunter and Central Coast areas. Derryck spoke about the relationship WBFE has with "We Care Connect". All our Volunteers found Derryck's talk to be very interesting. A big thank you to John Hazelwood who entertained us with his songs. Everyone joined in singing and dancing. We raised \$735 by selling raffle tickets and our merchandise on the day.



Derryck enjoying the Luncheon



John Hazelwood

The **Circle and Square quilt raffle** raised \$1,087. A fantastic result. The Circle and Square quilt was made by **Jenny Loss**. Jenny is a wonderful supporter of WBFE and a very skilful quilter. We very much appreciate your ongoing support, Jenny.

A very big thank you to all the people who sold tickets and of course to the people who bought them. Congratulations to the winner, Anne Hardman (from the Tuesday Workshop Team)



The Fundraising Team's last event for 2024 was the Christmas Twilight Markets at Warners Bay Foreshore on Tuesday 26th November. This year we decided to set up 2 Marquee's to separate our General merchandise from our Christmas goods. Last year, because we are a charity we didn't have to pay for our stall. Unfortunately, this year we had to pay for both our stalls. A big Thank You goes to Carolyn Clausen and Maree Blanch for sponsoring us at the Markets by paying for both of our stall sites. It was a very hot afternoon. Most of the customers at the markets didn't turn up until after 5:30 to 6:00pm. We raised \$702 at this event, which is an average result. I would like to thank Julie and Paul Farquhar, Roberta Hodgson, Carolyn Clausen, Ann Van Der Valk, Kerry Phillips, Gunter Wett, Rosalie Crispin, Jenny Payne, Chris Gill, Daveen Smyth and Wendy Webb for helping us to set up and to pack up the Marquees, tables and stock. The Fundraising Committee will have to decide if we do the Twilight Markets again, especially if we have to pay for our sites.



This year we raised a total of \$15,094 this year.

The Fundraising Team will be meeting at the beginning of next year to organise our Fundraising events for 2025. **We would like to welcome anyone who would like to come along and join our Fundraising team.**

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas with your Family and friends. Thank you to everyone for all your hard work and dedication to the Fundraising Team.

Lastly, I would like to thank the following businesses, who supported us this year with their donations.

Baker's Delight at Warners Bay, **Wine Selectors** in Newcastle, **Newcastle Permanent MasterCard** (thanks to Anita Yarrow). **Belmont 16s** at Belmont. **Bunnings** at Bennett Green. **Seaview Malaysian restaurant** at Redhead. **Woolworths** at Belmont and Mt Hutton. **Brown Sugar restaurant** at Warners Bay. **Coles** at Mt Hutton. **WOW** (Women on Wednesday). **Zenn Beauty** at Belmont.

TEAM LEADER REPORTS

Tuesday (Rebecca Wett)

The Tuesday group now has 9 Volunteers. We would like to welcome Jenny Payne who has recently joined our very productive group.

We accomplish a lot in the 4 hours we are at the workshop. We each have a role from pinning, making toppers, joining remnant fleece, sewing labels or stitching and turning to make blankets. Like other teams it's frustrating to have to resize toppers that are too small or too wide before pinning. As this is making extra work for all.

The group are all very supportive of the fundraising events we have throughout the year. Some of the ladies have recently been sewing items for our Twilight Christmas Markets at Warners Bay foreshore. Our Christmas items include tree skirts, wine bottle holders, bowl cosies, bunting, Santa sacks and children's dresses as well as our usual WBFEE items.

We look forward to morning tea and having a short break. I would have to say we really enjoy each other's company and we look forward to coming and doing something really worthwhile. The Tuesday group would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a well-deserved break. We look forward to seeing all of you in the New Year.

From Rebecca and The Tuesday Team.

Wednesday AM (Julie Farquhar)

We continue to share our weekly lives and experiences on Wednesday mornings even when some of us are overseas or in other parts of Australia. We care and share the joys and sad parts of our worlds with each other.

This year we have learned new recipes, travel advice, solving world problems, good books to read, which shows to watch and that we have a new screen door. All while sewing and being serious about our productivity. As a team we fix fleeces, sew, pin, cut squares, make toppers, tidy the material room, vacuum and then sew at home. No different from other teams but we feel we have achieved something to make someone else's life a little better.

Also, this year we completed our first fund raiser for WBFEE. In previous years we have supported and helped out at other events but this was entirely from Team Wednesday AM. It was a big learning curve but we are very happy with the result. Some ideas have been floated for next year....but who knows?

So from team Wednesday AM to everyone else, we wish you a safe and happy holiday season.



Wednesday PM (Christine Gill)

The Wednesday afternoon continues to soldier on and produce a great output. All the team contribute significantly to WBFEE

From the Wednesday afternoon workshop team, I would like to wish all the WBFEE volunteers a wonderful Christmas and a Happy Safe New Year!!

Looking forward to volunteering together in 2025!

Thursday (Roberta Hodgson)

Thursday team runs very well with good teamwork. Glennis and I usually go in about 11 am to do prepping, getting tops measured ready to be pinned. We have 3 ladies on sewing machines- Julie Tungi and Kerrie and Sue is on overlocker. Chez, Ruth, Glennis and I all pin and Cathy is our wonderful ironing lady, so we work well together. When anyone is away, their place can be filled. Dot usually cuts up uniforms and gets our afternoon tea but has the last term off with health problems. Ruth has had surgery on her foot but is now back on board. It is a pleasure to work there on Thursdays and we support each other with health and emotional issues as needs arise. We learn a lot from each other, share food and recipes and take delight in our work.

Love Roberta

Friday (Helen Clarke)

Like the other teams we have had a very busy period with great success. The way things are working now is perfect. With teams cutting, another team pinning, another putting material together to make toppers and then another joining them up and finishing them off. As somebody said on Friday, our organization has become a well-oiled machine, which is wonderful.

We have a very full team on Friday, which allows us to process different parts of the final finishing off. We lost our Jenny a few months ago but Maisy has joined us now and Sue tells me we have another lady joining us to do the ironing. Brilliant!

Of course it is not always hard work, we sometimes have to discuss our various medical problems and put each other on the right track but that is part of being a little family, which I believe we are. We have our "Show and Tell" time with morning tea and are astounded by the beautiful, crocheted rugs that we are shown. We all have our niche, and I believe we have a very happy family group but you don't have to believe me, come and see for yourself.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a wonderful New Year.



Helen & the Friday Team

EVENTS & PROMOTION OF WBFE

Since the last Newsletter we have presented to the Wallsend Ladies Probus. There was a lot of interest in what Warm Blankets does and the group was amazed at the wonderful blankets that our volunteers produce. We were given a large number of donations and some volunteers were gained from the Event.

WBFE is becoming more well known in the wider community. This is as a result of the publicity given as a result of the **Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation** Grant and the articles in the **Belmont 16's** newsletters. Also WBFE has been highlighted in Facebook posts from Food not Bombs and Newcastle Grammar who are closely associated to the Christ Church Cathedral Outreach Program (Community Lunch). **WBFE has showcased in the October edition of the Hunter & Coastal Lifestyle Magazine.** The article acknowledged our success in obtaining the Grant from the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation and how WBFE used the funds to support organisations help those in need. The article focussed on Christchurch Cathedral. Also the Magazine included an article that highlighted the work of Di, the Distribution Co-Ordinator, and her role in contributing to the overall success of WBFE.

WBFE received acknowledgement in the **2024 Newcastle Volunteer Service Awards.** WBFE was included in the Christ Church Cathedral Outreach Program (Community Lunch) award for providing support to the homeless people in Newcastle. The award was accepted by Sue Bardsley & Di Ebert.

Sue Bardsley was a guest panelist at the Newcastle Business Club October Lunch. The topic for the panel was the "Power of Community Connection".

Panellists for this event were:

- Sonia Casanova – CEO, Dress for Success
- Sam Poolman – Former Australian Netballer and Founder of Aspire Netball

- Giavanna Angeli – Head of Philanthropy, HMRI
- Susan Bardsley - Chairperson and Co-Founder, Warm Blankets for Everyone



Zeal Futures

WBFE has been highlighted in the Zel Futures website for the work done in the community. Zeal Futures were looking to dispose of old uniforms after a company rebranding and wanted to ensure they were not wasted or used in landfill. They became aware of WBFE and were amazed at what we do to recycle the uniforms. Zeal Futures CEO Sharon Smith thanks all WBFE volunteers for their service to the community. The link to the full article is below OR search “zeal futures news keeping the community warm”

[Vital service keeping the community warm](#)

As advised in the last Newsletter WBFE was invited to participate in **the Christ Church Cathedral Community Outreach Program 40th Anniversary celebration**. The Event included a service at the Christ Church Cathedral, a morning tea and a luncheon that included the CCC volunteers, Newcastle Grammar students and major supporters of the program including Orange Sky (Mobile Laundry Service), Wanderers Rugby Club, Newcastle City RSL and WBFE. WBFE was represented by Julie & Paul Farquhar and Di & Dave Ebert. Julie read an Intercession on behalf of WBFE. A banner was produced by Di & Dave that was highlighted during the service. Dean of Newcastle, The Very Reverend Katherine Bowyer spoke very highly of WBFE and the support provided by the blankets produced by our volunteers.



Suzanne Evans - Program Co-Ordinator & Dean Katherine



Di & Dave Ebert with the WBFE Banner



Julie Farquhar reading an Intercession



WBFE Banner on display

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Following are some emails received acknowledging all WBFE volunteer and the efforts and contribution made in 2024....Well done to all!

Janette Eeles STRAS Belmont

Morning Di

Yes, please we would love some more blankets before your Xmas break. Thank you again for all that you and your team do for us and the community

Janette

Alison Cook Hunter Co-Ordinator We Care Connect Thornton

Morning Di, Thank you and the whole Warm Blankets team for your wonderful support over the past year.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

Kind regards,

Lyn Walsh Allambi Care

Hi Di,

Thank you for advising me of your closing and re-opening dates.

On behalf of Allambi Care I send our heartfelt thanks to yourself and team at WBFE for supplying us with beautiful quilts for our clients, they are so appreciated.

I would also like to wish you all a very happy and safe Christmas Season.

Kind regards,

Lyn Walsh

Carer-Staff Support

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GRANTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Organisations that saw fit to support WBFE and approve our Grant requests. Without this financial support it would be very difficult for WBFE to be able to supply the numbers of our wonderful fleece backed that we have done this year.

The Grant providers and key supporters are:

Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation – Lanah Maruff & Samantha Willcox

Federal Government 23-24 Volunteers Grant - Minister Conroy & Melanie Field

Belmont 16's – Jess Graham

Central Leagues Club Charlestown – Vikki Dickinson

The monies provided have been used by WBFE to purchase:

- Polar Fleece
- Replace worn out and unsafe chairs with new ergonomic stools
- Replace old sewing machines.
- Purchase an AirThread Overlocker
- Workshop equipment such as scissors, cutters, mats, machine needles
- Screen door to improve ventilation and airflow for workshop teams

GENERAL

A reminder to all of the Christmas Closedown period will be from **Friday 13th December 2024 to Monday 4th February 2024.**

A question was raised at the recent WBFE Board meeting regarding the use of Remnant Fleece as backing for our blankets. The Board strongly supports the continued use of remnant fleece as an important component of delivering the number of blanket requests by organisations. The cost of remnant fleece backed blankets is minimal compared to those made with polar fleece and WBFE cannot always rely on grant funds to purchase fleece. It was noted that at the inception of WBFE only remnant fleece was used. Regarding the blanket quality, it was discussed that every effort is made to make the toppers and backing as best as possible, but on occasions there may be flaws that are missed in the checking process. It was also noted that none of the organisations or recipients of WBFE blankets have ever complained about the blankets. Quality to them is about warmth, comfort and security. It was agreed when Team Leaders identify a topper or remnant fleece backing that they consider not satisfactory that item is to be put aside with a note for the Workshop Manager who will correct the item and return for use.

Just a reminder of the items WBFE can accept (as we can use it) and what we can't (Because we can't use it). Please remind any friends and family wanting to donate items to WBFE of this.

We can accept – Cotton fabric & curtains, Flannelette & polar fleece, Woollen Blankets (clean, stain free with no holes), Doona Covers, Knitted & Crochet blankets (single bed size), Unfinished Patchwork, Wool & Crochet cotton, Knitted or Crochet squares (sizing as per Wrap with Love website)

We can't accept – Silk, Satin, Lace, Polyester, Doonas, Small crochet items.

Thank you all and have a wonderful break and we will do it all again next year. Dave

