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On the cover:
University of Adelaide student and volunteer Linh Dan Luong photographed by Huong Khuong.

PAGE 27

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Our Vitality magazine continues to showcase the amazing diversity and outstanding work of volunteers in our communities. There are many stories, events and achievements to highlight and I am delighted to focus attention on two more recent events.

In March 2016 I was invited to be the keynote speaker at the Agency for Volunteer Service’s “Volunteering - Brightening the Life of Older People” Conference in Hong Kong (see photos on page 8). The Agency for Volunteer Service (AVS) is Hong Kong’s national peak volunteering body and was founded in 1970, four years before Australia’s first volunteering bureau, now known as the Centre for Volunteering in Sydney.

The impetus for my invitation to speak at their inaugural conference was the mutual challenge of an ageing population and our recently published book “Positive Ageing – Think Volunteering” edited by Joy Noble and Louise Rogers.

I outlined in my speech that older people are an immense and too often untapped resource for family, community, our social and cultural fabric, and the economy. Out-dated paradigms of ageing need to be turned on their head, so that how we see ourselves and how we view ageing become far more positive and aspirational. An ageing population will require investment in our older citizens, as well as new volunteer roles, new attitudes and new vision.

The National Volunteering Conference is the principal Australian forum for not for profit leaders, volunteer managers and policy contributors to come together and build knowledge, innovation, networks and leadership to advance volunteering. The 16th National Conference was held in Canberra in early April 2016 and was an extremely successful event.

All the keynote speakers were exceptional. John Brogden AM, Dr Brendan Nelson and Dr Thomas Nielsen’s shared thread was of service and giving; the benefits of volunteering; personal challenges overcome; and humility in leadership. This was juxtaposed against the wicked humour of Robyn Moore and Jean Kittson, who entertained and educated us simultaneously at various times during the conference!

The Margaret Bell Oration was given by Kylee Bates, World President of the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) who outlined 6 strategies for building the future with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals as the framework for organising volunteering. She also indicated the latest estimates: that there are over one billion volunteers worldwide and that volunteering within the OECD countries is valued at $1 trillion!

Launched at the Conference was the ‘2016 State of Volunteering in Australia’ Report, which was compiled by Volunteering Australia with the assistance of PwC, and analysed the findings from a national survey of volunteers, volunteer involving organisations and corporates. One of the finding was that 86% of volunteer involving organisations are struggling to get the volunteers they need, with volunteers deterred by factors such as personal expense, red tape and a lack of flexibility. This will not come as a surprise to those in our sector, but may highlight the sad reflection that not much has changed over the years!

There are over one billion volunteers worldwide and volunteering within the OECD countries is valued at $1 trillion!
Volunteering brings many benefits to our state. It builds and strengthens communities and fosters a sense of belonging, connection, neighbourliness and engagement.

As Minister for Volunteers, I am extremely proud of South Australia’s history of helping in times of crisis.

During the Sampson Flat bushfire recovery effort, hundreds of skilled volunteers registered to help out. More recently, a register was set up to assist Syrian refugees due to arrive in South Australia, and once again hundreds offered their time and support. I thank Volunteering SA&NT for its work coordinating this effort, which demonstrates the caring, humanitarian spirit of South Australia’s volunteers.

Volunteering is essential to many community services, and our volunteers also play a significant role in the South Australian economy. This is why my government is strongly committed to the Volunteering Strategy for South Australia 2014-2020, a six year operational blueprint that addresses the diverse concerns of our volunteers.

Support for the Strategy continues strongly in 2015-16. Four project groups have been established to respond to key issues, including adopting the revised National Volunteer Standards.

Happily, I note that many local South Australian community organisations received a boost from last year’s Volunteer Support Fund. The latest round of funding received an overwhelming response with 93 organisations across South Australia receiving grants for training, equipment and other resources to support their volunteers in important roles.

I thank you all for your ongoing commitment to promoting volunteering and making your communities better places to live.

Volunteering SA&NT would like to thank the Minister for Volunteers for her ongoing support of our organisation.

Volunteering SA&NT is proud to be the peak not for profit body for volunteering in South Australia and the Northern Territory.
Looking for volunteers?

ADVISE THROUGH VOLUNTEERING SA&NT – IT’S EASY AND IT’S FREE!

SOPHIE KAOUKIS
PROGRAM COORDINATOR – VOLUNTEER POSITIONS
MANAGEMENT TEAM, VOLUNTEERING SA&NT

Many organisations advertise their volunteer opportunities via their own websites and other social media pages. This works well for organisations with a high public profile, however, for organisations less well known, traffic to their website may be slow.

This is where registering to advertise volunteer positions with Volunteering SA&NT can help you broaden your reach and better meet your volunteer recruitment needs.

When we load and activate your positions to our website, they automatically appear on the GoVolunteer website as well as the volunteering page of SEEK. This is a great way of extending your reach to more people and boosting your public profile.

The SEEK website alone gets a minimum of 7,000 visits, and on average, 8,000 expressions of interest to volunteer positions per month.

All you have to do is fill out an electronic Volunteer Position Vacancy form with your positions details and email it back to us – we do all the rest!

Not only do we manage this database, but we send you an email reminder when a position has expired. We can also provide assistance to help you get the most out of your advert. Our volunteer team of database managers can assist you with how best to word and sell your position to potential volunteers.

Our advertising program is available to all not-for-profit organisations which have current Public Liability insurance and current Voluntary Workers Insurance.

There are no fees involved and you don’t need to be a member of Volunteering SA&NT to utilise this service. Added member benefits include having your position featured on dedicated pages of the VSA&NT website.

We were successful in obtaining an appropriate committee member and I would like to thank Volunteering SA&NT for making that possible.

TESTIMONIAL – VICTIMS OF CRIME NT.

SOPHIE KAOUKIS
PROGRAM COORDINATOR – VOLUNTEER POSITIONS
MANAGEMENT TEAM, VOLUNTEERING SA&NT

Advertise your volunteer position with Volunteering SA&NT.

Advertise your volunteer positions with us and your adverts will automatically appear on the SEEK and GoVolunteer websites.

To register for this service you will need to:
• be a not-for-profit organisation
• have current Public Liability Insurance
• have current Voluntary Workers Insurance

Advertise your volunteering positions in three simple steps:
1. Download the Volunteer Position Vacancy Form volunteeringsa.org.au/VSA_HOME_Advertise
2. Fill in all relevant fields – be sure to include as much detail as is required
3. Create a save as version and email to vacancies@volunteeringsa-nt.org.au

*If you are new to the service please ensure you meet the eligibility criteria above and include details of both your insurances on the Volunteer Position Vacancy Form.

VOLUNTEERING SA&NT
Contact us now for more information and to register:
08 8225 9313
vacancies@volunteeringsa-nt.org.au
www.volunteeringsa-nt.org.au
Our hard-working training team has delivered nearly 100 workshops, custom sessions and presentations over the past year. As always, we offered an exciting mix of sessions and topics that cater to the needs of our diverse members and clients. For 2016, we have reviewed the sessions and have an exciting program for the year ahead! Check out all the details on our website and plan your whole year of training options.

Our introductory sessions will now be a mix of free and subsidised sessions, through the continuing generosity of the SA Office for Volunteers. This support helps us offer you the best in basic information and skill development for volunteers and volunteer managers, especially those who are new to the voluntary sector. We have kept our structured approach to the intermediate and advanced sessions, offering more detailed information and skills maintenance for those with medium to high level skills and experience.

And for our regional members and friends, monthly webinars are available too!

Registration for all training is easy! Follow the links on our website for all details, or contact us with your enquiry.

For specific sessions just for your organisation, our tailored sessions can be developed and provided for your Board/Committee members, employees, volunteers and managers at any time.

Visit our website for full program details:

www.volunteeringsa-nt.org.au
Volunteer Management
Coordinators, managers and other staff in management and supervisory positions supporting volunteers.

### Introductory

**Develop foundation skills if you are:**
- new to the volunteer sector;
- keen to gain new skills and information on volunteer related issues;
- join our networks.

### Intermediate

**Build on existing skills and knowledge if you are:**
- working in the volunteer sector with some experience and skills;
- looking to upgrade your skills, share experiences with peer colleagues and increase your networks.

### Advanced

**Bringing accomplished professionals together:**
- people in the volunteer sector who are highly experienced and skilled;
- people wanting to engage and collaborate with professionals from existing networks, other sectors and business.

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**Masterclasses**

Australian Institute of Company Directors

**Governance and Finance for NFP Boards – SA&NT**

1 JUNE 2016 – SA
22 JUNE 2016 – NT

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**National Standards**

The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement have undergone an extensive review, with Volunteering SA&NT coordinating the process around Australia. Four-hour workshops are run quarterly in March, June, September and November, and are designed to help organisations plan for their implementation of the Standards with the guidance of our experienced facilitators and with support from the sector.

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**Webinars**

Grant Writing for Beginners
17 MAY 2016

Finding New Volunteers
21 JUNE 2016

Volunteer Management: The Essentials
26 JULY 2016

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**Volunteers**

Individuals working in the volunteer sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Training Level</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA &amp; NT</td>
<td>Volunteering: Rights, Responsibilities &amp; Rewards</td>
<td>Introductory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>*Communication: Communicating Effectively</td>
<td>Introductory</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Communication: Communicating with Confidence</td>
<td>Introductory</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Communication: Customer Service</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Communication: Connecting with Older People</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>*Mentoring: An Introduction</td>
<td>Introductory</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Mentoring: Professional</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>*Grant Writing: For Beginners</td>
<td>Introductory</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Grant Writing: Refining Your Application</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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</tbody>
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**Volunteer Management**

Coordinators, managers and other staff in management and supervisory positions supporting volunteers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>*Communication: Communicating with Confidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Communication: Making Teams Work</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Communication: Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Communication: Speaking in Public</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA &amp; NT</td>
<td>Communication: Challenging Behaviours</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Event Management and Marketing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA &amp; NT</td>
<td>*Volunteer Management: The Essentials</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA &amp; NT</td>
<td>Volunteer Management: Supervision</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Volunteer Management: Tricks Situations</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Volunteer Management: Professional Development Forums</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA &amp; NT</td>
<td>*Recruiting: Finding New Volunteers</td>
<td>Introductory</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA &amp; NT</td>
<td>Recruiting: Selection Strategies</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA &amp; NT</td>
<td>Recruiting: Induct, Reward, Retain</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Recruiting: CALD Volunteers</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Recruiting: Engaging Gen Y</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Volunteer Management: All the Essentials</td>
<td>Introductory</td>
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</tbody>
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**Organisations**

Governance for small, medium or large organisations, operating with full or partial volunteer support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>SA &amp; NT</td>
<td>Grant Writing: Refining Your Application</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Grant Writing: Finessing Your Application</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA &amp; NT</td>
<td>Governance: An Introduction</td>
<td>Introductory</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Governance: Skills for Boards and Committees</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Governance: Meetings – Do’s and Don’ts</td>
<td>Introductory</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Governance: Treasurer’s Role in small NFPs</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Governance: Financials, Meetings and More</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA &amp; NT</td>
<td>Risk Management</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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</tbody>
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*Subsidized through Office for Volunteers.
Working with a mentor can be an extremely rewarding experience for both mentor and mentee. Mentors can help define professional career goals and objectives and give honest and helpful feedback toward achieving those goals.

The Mentor Service at Volunteering SA&NT has been successfully matching former and current professional managers with all kinds of employees and volunteers from not for profit member organisations for a number of years. The service has recently expanded to include the mentoring of community groups in a partnership with the Multicultural Communities Council of SA. Mentors will soon commence working with these groups to help them establish organisational objectives such as strategic plans; grant writing and event management, among may other areas of potential development.

Volunteering SA&NT would like to acknowledge the contributions of our mentors and look forward to the new challenges and successes in our expanded service. Our mentors are dedicated to giving back to community and passing on their many years of management and professional experience to the next generation of managers and leaders.

If you are working in a not-for-profit, and your organisation is a member of Volunteering SA&NT, you may be interested in submitting an application to become a mentee. Likewise, if you are a manager or have significant professional experience and would like to become a mentor, details on how to apply can be found on the Volunteering SA&NT website.

David Jacquier
Program Support Officer, Volunteering SA&NT

Everyone needs a mentor!

Conference in Hong Kong

Evelyn O’Loughlin
CEO, Volunteering SA&NT

Contact us now for more information and to apply:
08 8221 7177
www.volunteeringsa-nt.org.au

Volunteering SA&NT

LEFT: CEO, EVELYN O’LOUGHLIN WITH THE TEAM AT THE AGENCY FOR VOLUNTEER SERVICE.
RIGHT: EVELYN O’LOUGHLIN ENJOYING THE CULTURAL SITES.
Big Sunday is ordinary, everyday people coming together to contribute back to those in our community who are struggling and are marginalised through isolation, poverty, disability or sickness. Big Sunday acts to provide hope to hopeless situations through practical service.
Red Cross volunteers at the ready

RED CROSS THANKS ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS WHO WERE READY TO HELP OUT IN THE WAKE OF VARYING DISASTERS ACROSS SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND THE NORTHERN TERRITORY.

KATIE ISAAC
MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS ADVISER, AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS

The first was the Pinery bushfire on 25 November 2015, causing major damage in regional South Australia. 91 homes were lost, hundreds of other buildings and vehicles were destroyed, and more than 80,000 hectares burnt.

Our volunteers quickly sprung into action, supporting evacuees and helping them to reconnect with their loved ones at relief centres in Gawler, Balaklava and Clare. They continued to provide daily support through December and January at a recovery centre in Gawler. It’s been the largest on-ground operation for Red Cross in SA since the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires.

Recovery is a difficult and long-term process, and we have contacted more than 1,200 households so far to provide support and keep them in the loop with follow-up services. Already over 200 volunteers have been involved with our response and we will continue to support people with their recovery throughout the year.

Our volunteers also made phone calls to 900 vulnerable people during a major heatwave in South Australia in mid-December. The volunteer callers were able to check on clients’ wellbeing and provide practical information on how to stay cool.

Then in the Northern Territory, a tropical low caused heavy rainfall and flooding in the Daly River region on Christmas Day. On Boxing Day the NT Government decided to evacuate the Daly River community to Darwin. Over the following two days, 478 people were moved from their homes to safety. Red Cross volunteers and staff were there during this difficult time. They were kept busy helping out at the evacuation centre in the Darwin Showgrounds and registering evacuees so friends and family would know their whereabouts.

Red Cross volunteers came from around the NT, as well as Queensland and as far away as New Zealand, to play a part in managing the evacuation centre on behalf of the NT Government over a gruelling 18 days. More than 50 volunteers and staff gave up their holidays to provide the Daly River community with food, clothing, a safe place to sleep and activities to keep the children entertained.

“Our Tiwi staff have previous connections to the Daly River community, which helped them to build a quick rapport with evacuees,” says Paul Mitchell, Red Cross’ NT Emergency Services Manager.

“Volunteers were also extremely hard-working, even taking on the night shifts (7pm to 7am) which were really taxing.

“It was wonderful to have so many people from around the NT working together, using their knowledge of the community to help out and having new volunteers eager to assist in any way they could.”

Daly River residents were finally able to return home on 12 January. One major highlight for many of the volunteers was the massive round of applause evacuees gave as the buses pulled out from the centre.

Thank you to all Red Cross people who provided care through a challenging season.

It was wonderful to have so many people from around the NT working together, using their knowledge of the community to help out.
Flagstaff Hill retirees Terry and Helen Harmer know how important it is to enjoy a garden of your own.

The passionate green thumbs set aside a day each fortnight to help maintain the gardens of older South Australians as part of the ACH Group Home Assist Onkaparinga volunteer gardeners program.

They commenced with the program in April last year to help people who wanted to live at home but found physical tasks a challenge.

They make a point of taking direction from the customer on all their work, which includes trimming, raking, sweeping, pruning and weed control.

“Were here to help, not to take over,” Terry says. “We ask how much they would like something cut back or how they would like something shaped, because everyone has their own ideas.”

Helen says as gardeners themselves, she and Terry are aware of how important it is for people to be able to maintain their outdoor areas.

“Being outside in a natural environment is so good for your overall wellbeing – both emotionally and physically,” she says. “We enjoy helping people, too. It’s a nice feeling.”

“We’re another point of social contact for people,” Helen says. “We always chat and provide a listening ear as we do our work.”

Helen and Terry are both retired but lead busy lives, squeezing in babysitting their four grandchildren, caring for Helen’s mother, travel and social commitments as well as keeping up with their own garden – a big block of mixed natives, raised vegetable beds, herbs and fruit trees.

“Our garden brings lots of birds – lorikeets and rosellas,” Helen says. “Terry has built the grandkids a cubby and they just love the garden.”

ACH Group Home Assist Onkaparinga is always looking for volunteers to assist residents in the local community. Volunteers are allocated a team of either two or three and carry out basic low level gardening assistance on a four-weekly or eight-weekly basis.

A variety of tools are provided and volunteers have access to regular training workshops, including fruit tree pruning and ACH Group mandatory training and safe practices.

ABOUT ACH

ACH Group is a not-for-profit aged care organisation that has been offering services to support good lives for older people in South Australia since 1952.

As well as accommodation options across Adelaide, the Fleurieu Peninsula and East Melbourne, the group offers a range of health, wellbeing, respite and support services, help at home and social activities.

Our 1700 specialist staff and hundreds of volunteers share the belief that older people should be valued and respected, connected to their communities and in control of their lives.

Being outside in a natural environment is so good for your overall wellbeing – both emotionally and physically. We enjoy helping people, too. It’s a nice feeling.
Lighting the way for refugee resettlement

BRYAN HUGHES
FUSE COORDINATOR, BAPTIST CARE

Being uprooted from one’s community and country is one of the most extreme experiences a human can have. Unfortunately for millions of refugees and asylum seekers this is a necessary last resort.

Adjusting to a new country, culture and language is difficult and stressful. The simplest of tasks, such as grocery shopping or catching a bus, can be overwhelming.

Which is why Baptist Care established the Fuse Mentoring Program – to connect new arrivals to volunteers who offer friendship, local knowledge and support. Since 2006, Fuse volunteers have supported 600 refugees and asylum seekers to settle in Adelaide. Like Jon.

Born in Iran, he was imprisoned and tortured for three months after criticising the Iranian government in a university speech. He was forbidden from returning to university. After being placed under government surveillance and gaol a second time, Jon sought asylum in Australia.

He was introduced to his volunteer mentor, Dan, through the Fuse program. A university student, Dan was also born overseas and understood many of the challenges Jon faced.

Most of the people here, asylum seekers or refugees, want to meet Australian people...they want to make friends...
The Fuse Program was perfect for me.

He's helped Jon learn to read and speak English and has encouraged him to come to community events.

Like other mentor pairs, Jon and Dan decide between them when and where to spend their time together. And while Dan's been able to answer many of Jon’s cultural questions – the two men also simply enjoy playing table tennis together.

“I realise that Dan is like my brother, like my older brother. Because he wants to offer things to me, like knowledge...I like Australian people. I like their culture...Most of the people here, asylum seekers or refugees, want to meet Australian people... they want to make friends...The Fuse Program was perfect for me.”

NEW FRIENDS JON AND DAN.

If you would like to support someone like Jon, and can spare 6 hours per month, please contact:
Bryan Hughes, Fuse Coordinator
0466 776 501
fuse@baptistcaresa.org.au
www.baptistcaresa.org.au
Ultimate connection and purpose

Over the past 40 years, Bene Aged Care has been responding to the needs of the Italian community in South Australia, delivering culturally appropriate services. Today, Bene Aged Care is South Australia’s leading multicultural aged care service provider, partnering with over 2500 members of our older and diverse community to assist living well and staying healthy at home.

Bene has a team of 220 volunteers who give their time generously with a benevolent heart and a great dose of passion. WHAT A GIFT!

In February this year, Carnevale (South Australia’s prevalent Italian festival) celebrated its 40th Anniversary. A team of 75 fantastic volunteers including Dr Carmine De Pasquale, Co-founder and Board member of Bene Aged Care, supported by Jasmyn Tran, volunteered their time gaining knowledge of food and culture, sharing inspiration and bringing an energetic charisma to the festival.

Responding to a Project Coordinator advertisement originally placed with Volunteering SA&NT, Jasmyn met the Volunteer Manager and became Bene’s youngest recruit. The role quickly evolved from the development of a traditional Bene recipe book to also include Jasmyn’s keen desire to be included in the Italian Festival, Carnevale. The Volunteer Manager recalls meeting Jasmyn, ‘I could see a sparkle in her and feel her passion and a rich sense of self’.

Jasmyn’s passion for volunteering with Bene was contagious as she quickly and effortlessly recruited her brother Ben and her circle of friends to also volunteer.

Jasmyn’s passion for volunteering with Bene was contagious as she quickly and effortlessly recruited her brother Ben and her circle of friends to also volunteer.

KYLIE MAHER
VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MANAGER, BENE AGED CARE

Over the past 40 years, Bene Aged Care has been responding to the needs of the Italian community in South Australia, delivering culturally appropriate services. Today, Bene Aged Care is South Australia’s leading multicultural aged care service provider, partnering with over 2500 members of our older and diverse community to assist living well and staying healthy at home.

Bene has a team of 220 volunteers who give their time generously with a benevolent heart and a great dose of passion. WHAT A GIFT!

In February this year, Carnevale (South Australia’s prevalent Italian festival) celebrated its 40th Anniversary. A team of 75 fantastic volunteers including Dr Carmine De Pasquale, Co-founder and Board member of Bene Aged Care, supported by Jasmyn Tran, volunteered their time gaining knowledge of food and culture, sharing inspiration and bringing an energetic charisma to the festival.

Responding to a Project Coordinator advertisement originally placed with Volunteering SA&NT, Jasmyn met the Volunteer Manager and became Bene’s youngest recruit. The role quickly evolved from the development of a traditional Bene recipe book to also include Jasmyn’s keen desire to be included in the Italian Festival, Carnevale. The Volunteer Manager recalls meeting Jasmyn, ‘I could see a sparkle in her and feel her passion and a rich sense of self’.

Jasmyn’s passion for volunteering with Bene was contagious as she quickly and effortlessly recruited her brother Ben and her circle of friends to also volunteer for the Carnevale. They all work many hours with a youthful energy and excitement.

Bene’s Carnevale team of volunteers shared their skills, their passions, their traditions and their time to embrace the Italian Festival. The volunteer support provided to Bene including the Volunteer Program Manager, Kylie Maher and Dr De Pasquale was invaluable.
The new ordinary: Big Sunday

JOSHUA HOLMES
PROJECTS MANAGER, BIG SUNDAY

On Big Sunday Weekend there are opportunities for every passion, talent, skill and age. Projects are scheduled throughout the weekend, and can last anywhere from one hour to a full day. For many people, Big Sunday is just the beginning of an involvement that continues throughout the year. Many of our volunteers build lasting relationships with not-for-profit groups and the local community.

In 2015, our volunteers and members contributed to a range of extraordinary projects across South Australia.

HAIRCUTS FOR THE HOMELESS

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In 2015, our volunteers and members contributed to a range of extraordinary projects across South Australia.

Over 30 haircuts were provided to the homeless community within the streets of Adelaide via a pop up salon.

ABORIGINAL SOBRIETY GROUP, HOUSE OF HOPE

In partnership with Fund My Community, Big Sunday completed a ground up renovation on a Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre for Aboriginal women, a first of its kind for South Australia.
Bringing ordinary, everyday people together to contribute to our Community.

KIDS FUN RUN
40 kids aged between 4 and 12 years old competed in a fun-run which raised well deserved funds for Team Kids, formally known as the Women’s and Children’s Foundation.

RAJAH STREET COMMUNITY CENTRE
A house and garden makeover, including painting the entire house, installing a cafe themed backyard with raised garden beds and fruit trees.

GENESIS PREGNANCY SUPPORT
Gift hampers and handmade feeding pillows were donated to the women of Genesis Pregnancy Support Organisation.

BIG SUNDAY OUT
A community event in the south parklands with live entertainment, food and drink stalls, face painting, kids’ games and more. Entry to the Big Sunday Out was by way of donation of canned food and toiletry products which were distributed to community shelters.

SKATE PARK PROGRAM
In partnership with Marion Council, Big Sunday provided a free BBQ lunch at the Marion Skate Park for all of the skating community.

LIVING KAURNA CULTURE CENTRE
In Partnership with Marion Council, Big Sunday provided a free BBQ lunch and support to Aboriginal youth within the community.

AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATION
Our Australia Day Celebration was focused on community. This year, at the John Miller Reserve in Somerton Park, we brought in food vans, cooked up an Aussie BBQ and hired a huge water-slide bouncy-castle for the kids.
Growing a better natural environment

When not working as Chief Reservoir Engineer for Santos, Gawler resident Marie-louise Lees is busy assisting efforts to revegetate degraded parts of South Australia with native species. Marie-louise and husband Graham are volunteer growers of seedlings for Trees For Life. Since 1996 they have grown nearly 10,000 native plants for landholders throughout the state.

Marie-louise’s interest in environmental issues was triggered early on by the sight of huge erosional gullies that scarred parts of the countryside where she grew up. Although not understanding at the time how they were caused, she nevertheless appreciated that nature was out of balance and needed help.

The first opportunity for her to make a difference presented itself when the couple bought a block at Cockatoo Valley in 1988. Graham and Marie-louise had plans to build, and their vision was of a home surrounded by native vegetation. The remnant vegetation on this farmed land, however, consisted of just a couple of gum trees and some native pines.

Their first efforts at revegetation involved buying plants from an Adelaide Hills nursery. Most, however, failed to thrive because they were not suited to local soil and rainfall conditions. After acquiring some local native species from a Santos colleague who grew seedlings for Trees For Life, success rates improved dramatically.

This experience inspired the couple to become Trees For Life growers themselves, beginning in late 1996. Since then, they grow 10 boxes of seedlings every year, with each box containing around 500 seedlings. The work is divided into two roles: Graham tube-fills and then Marie-louise sows and tends the developing seedlings.

They have since grown for several landholders, including two they have supported over many years.

“One of our long-term end-users wanted to revegetate a property at Warooka on Yorke Peninsula,” says Marie-louise. “From time to time, he would send us photo updates of how our trees were going, which we really appreciated.

Our other long-term end-user has a property on the South Australian west coast. He was inspired to revegetate his land after seeing the positive impact of alley farming in Western Australia, which we think is a really exciting development for his country.”

The couple have encountered a few challenges in their growing area over the years, including havoc wreaked by downpours and flocks of marauding corellas. However, they regard a little mischance as par for the course, and their enthusiasm remains undiminished.

They see themselves as making a small contribution to a great cause — and they are far from alone. Last summer, more than 460,000 native seedlings were grown for South Australian remediation projects. While Trees For Life currently enjoys the support of over a thousand volunteers, more are always welcome!
Building new networks

KAYE MAHOMET
CLIENT SERVICES MANAGER, VOLUNTEERING SA&NT

Networking is an important way of improving contacts with people in the not-for-profit sector. It provides the most productive, most proficient and most enduring way to build relationships. Continually connecting with new people, cultivating relationships and sharing resources is a vital part of the work of Volunteering SA&NT.

Meeting other like-minded people and gaining insight into how people in other organisations work offers volunteer managers the opportunity to generate innovative new ideas.

Mixing with people who have to rely on their own resources to survive and who have to think and work innovatively is always an inspiration and helps to start new ideas. Volunteer managers work as a team, and are always willing to share and offer encouragement to others.

Building the two new Volunteer Management Networks in the Riverland and Eyre Peninsula has been an incredible experience. We have been welcomed openly into each of the communities and have had the opportunity to meet a contingent of amazing people. Recruitment of new volunteers and minimising red tape continue to be the main topics of discussion at most meetings.

Working together and sharing ideas are integral to great Networks.

RAH Auxiliary celebrates 91 years

DESPINA MULLER
SECRETARY, ROYAL ADELAIDE HOSPITAL

Every Royal Adelaide Hospital (RAH) Auxiliary kiosk volunteer, past and present, has reason to feel proud — the organisation is celebrating 91 years’ service to staff and patients of the RAH, and every volunteer has helped raise a total of over $10 million, which has been donated to the hospital for the purchase of specialised medical equipment and assistance to the Social Work Department.

One of the outstanding volunteers contributing to this tremendous achievement is Dorothy Divito.

Back in 1980, Dorothy’s mum was set to become the kiosk’s newest volunteer, but in a twist of fate, Dorothy took her place instead. She remembers riding her bike to the hospital, and thinking “they may not want me”. But they did — and she started immediately, volunteering every Friday in the Sheridan Building kiosk. As Dorothy remembers it, the little round iconic building on the hospital grounds facing North Terrace “was very cosy”, and the Auxiliary was even permitted to sell cigarettes!

Three years later Dorothy started filling in for paid workers when they went on holidays. She would volunteer in the morning, and step into a paid work position in the afternoon. When a permanent part-time position was advertised, Dorothy applied and was immediately offered the job, likewise for the position of Assistant Kiosk Manager. On 1 May 1987, Dorothy became ‘Kiosk Manageress’ — a position she held for 7 years before retiring to once again becoming a volunteer. Dorothy loves coming in to the kiosk and contributing her time and skills. She has made many friends and shared lots of laughs throughout her time there.

In the new RAH, the Auxiliary will no longer sell food but will proudly sell crafts and gifts in its own shop. Dorothy looks forward to welcoming new volunteers and beginning a new chapter in the RAH Auxiliary’s history book.
Exemplary citizens, outstanding volunteers

THE ANNUAL AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS PROVIDE A CHANCE TO RECOGNISE MANY VOLUNTEERS FOR THE TREMENDOUS WORK THEY DO IN THEIR COMMUNITIES, AND RIGHTLY SO.

KATIE ISAAC
MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS ADVISER, AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS

This year Red Cross volunteers Libby Furner, from Mount Gambier SA, and Gillian Hagger, from Katherine NT, both received Citizen of the Year awards.

Libby has made her mark on generations of Mount Gambier locals both as a dedicated volunteer and a primary school teacher. When she arrived in the city in 1982 she only expected to stay four years, but decades later she is a true pillar of her community.

Libby’s history with Red Cross goes back to her teenage years, when she helped her mum to collect neighbourhood donations. She later went on to support people during the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires; successfully campaign for the blood donation service to return to Mount Gambier after a long hiatus; and serve on the Red Cross State board.

“You do these things without thinking about the reward,” Libby says. “Red Cross has had a strong profile for over 80 years in our city. We have been given generous support in all that time. I’m very grateful for that and enjoy the chance to repay by being involved in a variety of ways.”

Since arriving in Katherine nearly 50 years ago with her husband and five children, Gillian has been involved in countless committees, councils, boards and community services – and, of course, Red Cross.

As manager of Red Cross in Katherine for more than seven years, Gillian oversaw services including aged care, pensioner transport support, meals on wheels, and daily phone calls for socially isolated people. Following the 1998 Katherine floods she was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for her tireless work in coordinating the evacuation of the aged care hostel and for organising accommodation for displaced residents.

Over the years Gillian has raised money for people in need through canoe marathons, garden fetes, a hospital kiosk, shows and festivals. She even sold donuts and hot dogs from a donated caravan!

Congratulations and thank you to Libby, Gillian, and all the other Citizens of the Year in communities across SA and NT. You are true community heroes.

You do these things without thinking about the reward... I'm very grateful and enjoy the chance to repay by being involved in a variety of ways.
**Paddy arrives in the Red Centre**

**EMILY MACALLISTER**  
ADMINISTRATION OFFICER, ALICE SPRINGS POLICE STATION

Paddy the Platypus is the National SES mascot, and we’re excited to announce he has arrived in the Red Centre.

Paddy has been residing up in Darwin for the cyclone season, and has now made his first trip to Alice Springs. Paddy will be in Alice Springs up until the show where he will then jump on the truck and make his way back to the Top End.

During his visit, Paddy will be attending community events, schools, and businesses to teach students and adults all about keeping themselves and their families safe during natural disasters.

Paddy has 7 very important safety messages:

1. Have a household emergency plan  
2. Have a household emergency kit  
3. Never walk, ride, swim or play in floodwater or drains  
4. Do not shelter under trees in a storm  
5. Look after your pets  
6. Check on your neighbours  
7. Stay inside during storms

Paddy and his team of volunteers are always looking for more people to join them, they really are a group of ordinary people doing extraordinary things. Paddy has approximately 145 volunteer friends in the Central Australian region who respond to all kinds of emergencies from Land Search and Storm Damage, right up to Road Crash and Vertical Rescue. All training is provided internally through the Northern Territory Emergency Service’s training team.

Paddy is available for bookings through the Alice Springs office by either phoning 08 8951 9300 or emailing ntes@pfes.nt.gov.au.

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**Spreading Christmas cheer in July**

**JACKIE MCEWEN**  
VOLUNTEER OFFICER, BLIND WELFARE ASSOCIATION

Each year, the Blind Welfare Association of SA Inc holds a “Christmas in July” party for our members.

In fact we hold two, one in July and the other the usual time just before Christmas.

Without the help of our wonderful and dedicated volunteers these events could not take place.

The volunteers assist in a tremendous range of tasks for the event. Including, but not limited to:

- Driving members to and from the event;
- Sight guiding throughout the day;
- Setting up Christmas decorations;
- Shopping for and helping to wrap presents;
- Cooking the Christmas meal;
- Serving and assisting with meals and drinks;
- Entertainment;
- Assisting members to participate in various games;
- Washing up and packing away at the end of the day; and
- Photographing all the festivities.

Both events take up a full day of work for the volunteers, and our volunteers are not forgotten as they are treated to their own Christmas lunch just before Christmas. Here they get the chance to relax and enjoy the fellowship amongst other volunteers.

Without our volunteers we would not be able to run events like this for our members, which are an invaluable part of providing friendship, social interaction and fun.
On any given weekday, two stores in southern Adelaide are providing a second chance for second hand goods and in turn a second chance for some in our community who need that second chance the most. The volunteers are there to make it all possible.

"Without volunteers, we simply couldn’t survive," says Di Whyte, General Manager of Second Chances Op Shop, Sturt. "I just appreciate every single volunteer that I’ve got. I love it and they love it." The Op Shop is dependent on 25 volunteers who keep the shop running six days a week.

According to Di, the store is a hub of friendship for both shoppers and volunteers alike, and if managing a store was not enough to keep her busy, "I’ve even turned into a bit of a counsellor," Di adds. The warmth in her tone suggests she would not have it any other way.

Just a few minutes away in St Mary’s, volunteers at Second Chances Furniture Warehouse are busy packing furniture into the store’s white Hino truck. It is here, just off South Road, that Liam manages a team of a dozen volunteers as they retrieve, sell, and deliver second hand furniture and white goods five days a week.

"We are a team," Liam says. "People volunteer here to either give back or because they want to do something." He adds with a chuckle, "We even try and make it fun sometimes."
Keeping RFDS in the air

KATE HANNON
MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER, RFDS CENTRAL OPERATIONS

One of Liam’s younger volunteers has found such a sense of community and meaning at the store that even after his Work for the Dole contract ended, he nonetheless continues on volunteering at the store three days a week.

Volunteers like this are the lifeblood of Second Chances SA (SCSA). Across the state, SCSA has more than 100 volunteers. They each contribute to important roles, including running op shops, facilitating mentoring camps for children with parents in prison, and providing practical support for prisoners and ex-offenders (including helping to provide them with birthday and Christmas presents for their children). The volunteers perform these roles with the aim of restoring hope where it has been lost and intercepting the generational cycle of crime.

“We believe in giving second chances not just to things, but to people as well,” says Helen Glanville, Chief Executive of Second Chances SA.

Op Shop
397 Diagonal Road,
Sturt, South Australia, 5047
08 8296 5588

Furniture Warehouse
1205 South Road,
St Mary’s, South Australia, 5042
0435 392 468

If you would like to volunteer with Second Chances SA contact:
Helen Glanville
08 8272 0323
office@secondchances.org.au
www.secondchances.org.au

Camps for Children with Parents in Prison.

Each year, more than 292,000 people are assisted by the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) – that’s one person every two minutes!

Founded in 1928 by the Reverend John Flynn, RFDS provides medical help to those living, travelling and working in rural and remote Australia who are isolated from medical and health services.

Working through our Auxiliaries and Support Groups, Flying Doctor volunteers are the lifeblood of community support for the RFDS. The work of our volunteers is vital to support the operations of the organisation. Through hard work and innovative fundraising ideas, volunteers in 23 volunteer Auxiliary and Support Groups managed to raise the sum of $868,600 during the 2014/15 financial year.

With a Fisherman’s Ball in the south-east, a bingo night in Adelaide, a cake stall in Port Augusta, regular dinners with guest speakers, the annual golf day in Roxby Downs, almost every week our volunteers are hard at work spreading the word and raising funds through donation tins and events.

Our Adelaide Auxiliary recently ran a merchandise stall at the Caravan and Camping Lifestyle Show in support of the RFDS simulator’s appearance. The simulator is a replica of a Flying Doctor Pilatus PC-12 aircraft which has an interior fitted out with stretchers, medical equipment and a replica of the cockpit. The simulator is popular amongst children and adults and is in high demand at country field days and schools.

RFDS Central Operations Volunteer Coordinator, Debbie Adams, said there was great diversity in ideas when it came to the fundraising efforts of RFDS volunteers. “Year in and year out, our Auxiliaries and Support Groups put in an extraordinary effort to bring out community support for the Flying Doctor,” Mrs Adams says. “Often our volunteers are people who have been flown to hospital by the RFDS or who have family members who have needed our services, or they know someone who has been helped.”

All fundraising goes directly towards aircraft replacement and the medical fitout of aircraft.

ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE
Debbie Adams
Volunteer Coordinator
08 8238 3333
www.flyingdoctor.org.au

VOLUNTEERS HELEN DUFFY AND PETER JOHNSTON.
The small team patrols for two to three hours most Tuesday mornings, and over the past three years, the team has been successful in reducing graffiti vandalism from our community by almost 50%.

As coordinator of the program, I was devastated when I was faced with the threat of two volunteers taking extended leave and the possibility of having to shut the program down. After struggling to replace leaving volunteer, my choice were limited, considering it is a requirement that at least two team members must be on graffiti sites at all times.

Being new to the role of Volunteer Support Officer at Council, I had little knowledge of a Local Government (LG) Volunteer Passport System initiative. The initiative had previously involved intensive work and research to develop a passport system that would enable volunteer movement across Council boundaries in South Australia, with particular reference to volunteer emergency recovery support. A final report on the LG Volunteer Passport System had recommendations not to proceed with the initiative.

My only option was to call LGA Mutual Liability Scheme to see if we could use volunteers from another Council. My understanding was that Councils were in a position to share volunteers across regions to cover times of need, and barriers such as induction and insurance would be covered.

Our representative was very supportive and understanding of my plight. We were advised that the volunteer would remain covered under the LGA Mutual Liability Insurance Scheme as long as: the volunteers had received full Council induction at their respective Councils; received an onsite WHS induction at the new site; and used Council vehicles to travel to and from Mount Barker.
My next call was to Ngareta, Volunteer Coordinator with the Rural City of Murray Bridge (RCMB), our neighbouring Council. RCMB also operate a volunteer graffiti removal team and our programs are very similar. During the setup phase of the GET Proud Program we shared information, ideas and knowledge which benefited both programs, this gave me the confidence that a partnership in my time of need could work.

We discussed the pros and cons, consulted with, and sought approval from our managers to proceed with the task of keeping the Mount Barker program running.

The RCMB quickly identified a suitable volunteer who was very happy to travel to Mount Barker weekly and help out. Without further ado he arrived the very next Tuesday morning and undertook our Council induction and onsite WHS induction.

Our Mount Barker GET Proud volunteer was also involved in the onsite induction by demonstrating the specially fitted trailer and equipment used. The volunteers were happy to compare vehicles, products and methods used in their respective programs.

It was great to see two volunteers from different regions working together with the same goal in sight.

I decided to develop a ‘Volunteer Passport’ for Local Government volunteers who have the opportunity to work across regions as a show of appreciation, as well as providing the volunteer with documented evidence of their willingness and abilities to do so.

Once the assignment is completed with the new Council, the passport is signed off by the program coordinator or manager and any comments are recorded.

After our program returned to normal, Ngareta and I met with the volunteers. I was very happy and proud to present the RCMB volunteer with his new Volunteer Passport which captures his very much appreciated time and efforts with us.

The sky is the limit and I can easily see the Volunteer Passport application adapted and applied to young people seeking employment having hard evidence of their commitment, skills and experience. A flow on effect from this project has seen other volunteers work within other Council programs. Working collaboratively with another Council has been a rewarding and valuable experience for us all.*

Comments from the volunteers:

Paul

“I’d be more than happy to be involved again should the need arise. I was able to learn new skills, get to know some new people and have a change of scenery too. I would say to other volunteers to take the opportunity if you have a chance – you can get a lot out of it.”

David

“I’d also be more than happy to be involved again, I enjoyed meeting and getting to know Paul and sharing how we operate our program. Always happy to assist incoming volunteers.”

Comments from the Volunteer Coordinators:

Ngareta

“Local Government Volunteer Managers have a network which facilitates the transfer of knowledge and experience and the sharing of policies, procedures and practices across Councils. One of the networks objectives is to develop partnering opportunities across Councils so I was very excited when Julie contacted me with an opportunity to put this into practice. Murray Bridge and Mt Barker both have successful graffiti removal programs and have put their resources together in the past in the way of training and familiarisations, so Julie and I were very confident that our teams could work together in this first of ‘cross Council volunteering’.*

Julie

“Our exchange of volunteers has allowed personal growth and development, increasing their personal skills, expertise and confidence. Positive feedback of the program has been received from various forums as well as one of my General Managers who commented if he was interviewing for a position and an applicant presented a Volunteer Passport he would be impressed. We have demonstrated our success and collaborative relationships between Councils and regions to our Managers and General Managers.

The sky is the limit and I can easily see the Volunteer Passport application adapted and applied to young people seeking employment having hard evidence of their commitment, skills and experience. A flow on effect from this project has seen other volunteers work within other Council programs. Working collaboratively with another Council has been a rewarding and valuable experience for us all.”

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Working collaboratively with another Council has been a rewarding and valuable experience for us all.
The gift of giving

JULIE DAYMAN
VOLUNTEER SUPPORT OFFICER, MOUNT BARKER DISTRICT COUNCIL

Each year the Mount Barker District Council has the pleasure of recognising our volunteers’ hard work and dedication by presenting them with an end of year thank you gift in appreciation of their voluntary hours provided to our community. Previously the gifts had been sourced commercially. However in 2015 the 15-member strong Mount Barker Country Women’s Association (CWA) group handcrafted our gifts - and the results were outstanding.

The CWA provided gifts for each program and age group, including: homemade confectionery, BBQ, preserves, Christmas cakes, hand-knitted beanies and mittens, handcrafted library bags, emergency glovebox kits, and “Spa in a Jar” pamper packs.

Positive feedback on the variety and quality of these gifts has been received from both Volunteer Program Managers and the volunteers. All agreed it was wonderful to receive a gift handcrafted from volunteers in appreciation of other volunteering efforts.

The CWA’s aim is to improve the conditions for women and children and make life better for families, especially those living in rural and remote Australia. Their ethos is ‘Service to Community and Friendship’.

A large proportion of the profits have been returned to the community with the installation of two park benches at the Mount Barker Maternity Hospital. The benches proudly display CWA donation plaques.

The flow-on effect in the Mount Barker Community has already been reflected through reenergizing the Mount Barker CWA and signs of increasing community participation and membership numbers.

Our community volunteers have made gifts from their hearts for our volunteers, with profits going back to the community. The full circle of volunteer giving has been successful.

“Thank you Ladies you are all AMAZING and greatly appreciated by your fellow Community Members and Volunteers.”

We were overwhelmed by the effort, dedication and delight that this project has brought to all involved.
The Friends of the Larapinta Trail (FOLT) is a not-for-profit community group dedicated to the promotion, preservation and maintenance of this world class, long distance walking trail.
Coming Full Circle

AN AMAZING PROJECT FOR ALL PARTIES INVOLVED – THIS EXHIBITION WAS THE CULMINATION OF A MASSIVE AMOUNT OF WORK THAT ARTIST TIFFANY MALTHOUSE AND THE STAFF AT THE NATIONAL PIONEER WOMEN’S HALL OF FAME (NPWHF) HAVE PUT INTO FULL CIRCLE.

DIANNA NEWHAM
CURATOR, NATIONAL PIONEER WOMEN’S HALL OF FAME

What started with a meeting with Dianne Logan at Volunteering SA&NT 18 months ago, and a nervous introduction for Tiffany at the NPWHF, this project blossomed into a meaningful and valued experience for all involved. This exhibition is the ‘product’ of this journey, and showcases so much more for Tiffany. She has learnt valuable new skills with the continual support of NPWHF Curator, Dianna and Business Manager, Trudy. This project is one of the great success stories of Alice Springs in 2015.

There is another story being told here too, which Tiffany generously shares. Rarely is there the opportunity to be told a story as poignant as this.

TIFFANY’S STORY

When I was in grade eight I had a mother and a father in Hermannsburg. They took me to school every day when I was in preschool. My family used to tell me the funniest stories. Everywhere that my mother and father would go, they used to take me everywhere. When I was growing up, I never knew that I had an older sister. I love my family a lot.

This year has been very hard to deal with some things. It’s getting a little bit easier to understand why I’m living in town. My family is a bit far away from me. But I’ve learned a lot these past few years.

The changes that happened this year was that when you get older you have to do the hardest works. You don’t know how to do it and you have to work on it, so that you can get paid. I work at Bindi on Tuesdays, in the Hospital laundry on Thursdays, and on Fridays I’m at the National Pioneer Women’s Hall of Fame. I’ve been working here for about a year and you can see my work in this exhibition.

When I came here first, I was a little bit too shy. Then I got used to this work that I’m doing.

“We are so pleased to be working with Tiffany and hosting her exhibition Full Circle. Tiffany has chosen and responded to objects from our collection – a hat, tea caddy, cigarette case and some old bottle tops – in ways which brings out something new, unexpected and makes you stop and look at them a second time, differently.” - Brendan Colville, Teacher, Acacia Hill School

Museums are about valuable things but it is what we do with our valuable things which really matters. Our relationship with Tiffany and with the staff of Acacia Hill School who have given her such support — Brendan, Rowan, Michelle and Cheryle — is something precious to the National Pioneer Women’s Hall of Fame.
The University of Adelaide has one of the largest volunteer programs at any university in Australia, and its volunteers make an invaluable contribution to the culture and vibrancy of campus life. In 2015, over 2,400 volunteers participated in over 40 different groups and contributed 155,364 hours, equal to $5.2 million in dollar value.

The volunteers come from all walks of life and include alumni, students and staff who assist in areas such as the Barr Smith Library, University Sports, Faculty of Health Sciences, Radio Adelaide, the Theatre Guild, International Student Centre, Urrbrae House and many more.

Here’s what a selection of volunteers had to say about why they participate in the program.

**KERRY JAMES**
VOLUNTEER PROGRAM COORDINATOR, UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

I moved to Adelaide from Argentina nearly two years ago and being a volunteer has definitely helped me settle into my new life. I discovered the Urrbrae House gardens while I was studying English as a second language. I studied agronomy in Argentina and I’ve started a conservation and land management course, so volunteering here means I can use and increase my knowledge of plants as well as practise speaking English.

**ERICA BOYLE**
Volunteer in the Urrbrae House gardens and Waite Arboretum

I moved to Adelaide from Argentina nearly two years ago and being a volunteer has definitely helped me settle into my new life. I discovered the Urrbrae House gardens while I was studying English as a second language. I studied agronomy in Argentina and I’ve started a conservation and land management course, so volunteering here means I can use and increase my knowledge of plants as well as practise speaking English.

**MARGARET HARRISON**
Volunteer in the Barr Smith Library’s Theatre and Performing Arts Program

I volunteer with the Theatre and Performing Arts Program. Each week we meet to sort, date and file donated theatre programs and enter the data into the national performing arts database.

I love theatre and concerts and their history so this position is the perfect fit – it is interesting and has a genuine research purpose. Volunteering at the University of Adelaide is one of the best things I’ve done in a long life of volunteering.

**LINH DAN LUONG**
Student (Bachelor of Media) and volunteer with the Compass program

Being a volunteer with the University’s Compass program has been the best experience since arriving in Adelaide six months ago. I have made new friends and learnt a lot about Australian life and culture. Volunteering has given me a sense of community and family.

**ANDREW BRADLEY**
Volunteer with the Talking with Aussies program

I volunteered to meet Chinese international students in an attempt to improve my spoken Chinese, which had fallen out of practice. Through the program I’ve realised the importance of support and friendship with the people I’ve met, and the impact it has on our lives.
Staying connected

CONNECTING OLDER ABORIGINAL PEOPLE LIVING IN AGED CARE FACILITIES OR IN THEIR OWN HOMES WITH VOLUNTEER VISITORS IN ORDER TO OVERCOME SOCIAL ISOLATION AND ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE.

JANINE HAYNES
COORDINATOR, COMMUNITY VISITORS SCHEME, ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES SA

Aboriginal Community Care Services SA (ACCSA) has, since August 2014, been the auspicing/host organisation for the Community Visitors Scheme (CVS) for Aboriginal residents of nursing homes in metropolitan South Australia.

The Coordinator undertakes many tasks in her daily schedule of visits including sharing current general Aboriginal information; advocating on behalf of the residents, when requested, by making contact with relatives; making referrals to Aged Rights Advocacy Service (ARAS), Office of the Public Trustee and Metropolitan Domiciliary Care or Offices for Closing the Gap. The aim of the scheme is to ensure that older Aboriginal people who are residents of an aged care facility, or who still live in their own homes, remain connected to the general Aboriginal Community and don’t become socially isolated.

The demand for the service is evidenced by the waiting list of Aboriginal residents in mainstream nursing homes and also for Elders still in their own homes (who are in receipt of a Home Care Package) who are urgently seeking volunteer visitors. Through the reliable “Nunga Grapevine”, news about the scheme has reached all areas of the State and because of its need and success, it is anticipated that in the future the service will be expanded to cover the whole of the State.

Volunteers are encouraged to participate in providing a much-needed and welcomed service to older Aboriginal people.

THE STORY OF BEC

Every week, Bec (who is a non-Aboriginal woman) travels the short distance to visit her friend in a nearby nursing home. He’s the only Aboriginal resident in a 76-bed aged care facility and was initially referred to the CVS program by a mainstream male health worker who was concerned that this man was particularly socially isolated, not just from his family and friends but also from the culture of the Aboriginal community.

Bec has been outstanding in her dedication to this resident who is assured of an outing each week (depending only on his health status). The day starts with the obligatory drive-through at McDonalds and then perhaps a simple drive along the beach and a chat. He has enjoyed a Port Power game at the Adelaide Oval, Fringe Festival events starring Aboriginal performers, Aboriginal Survival Day at Semaphore, the Aviation Museum, the Tram Museum at St Kilda, Ashton’s Circus, the Gawler Show, shopping, movies and more.

Bec has been with the CVS since it began. She has a demanding job and studies part-time as well as volunteering at CVS. Her resident friend said in all seriousness to her one day, “You’re lucky you have me, otherwise you wouldn’t know what to do with yourself”.

THE STORY OF JENNY

Jenny is the Manager of the Aboriginal Elders Village at Davoren Park.

“Since the introduction of the Community Visitors Scheme to our facility, the atmosphere in the home has lifted and there is an air of excitement shown by the residents. When they know that their visitor is coming to take them out for the day, they get themselves organised early and then proceed to seat themselves near the front door so that they can see clearly who they are expecting to arrive. It is priceless to see their reactions when they are just so happy on these days to be doing something different from their ordinary weekly activities.”
THE STORY OF ROB

“I chose to volunteer at the Indigenous Eldercare home because I find the volunteering experience within the Elders Village extremely beneficial for me as a young man with Aboriginal heritage. The experience of spending time with a range of Elders and gain from their knowledge is something that I know I will always carry with me. I recently lost my grandfather quite suddenly within an Adelaide care home and I have found a great deal of closure in spending time with the residents of the Elders Village. Their willingness to share their life stories and the stories of their families has helped me come to terms with my family’s loss as well as the loss of knowledge that comes from losing a loved one.

I would recommend volunteering at the Elders Village as it is a rewarding experience and the elders are a great mix of kind, funny and insightful people.”

SHARING OF CULTURE

When the CVS scheme commenced in 2014, a woman applied to become a Visitor. She indicated to the Coordinator that she was particularly interested in learning more about Aboriginal culture. Her request was granted quickly as it was obvious with whom she would be readily matched.

We matched her with a resident from the traditional APY Lands of this State who loves sharing her culture by explaining her artworks, telling stories and singing songs with the familiar hand gestures of her people. She often visits the primary school across the road from the Village to teach Aboriginal history or culture. In turn, the students may reciprocate by attending the Village to interact with the residents. It is a fine example of positive intergenerational communication and pride in sharing of culture.

This match has developed into an ongoing, mutually-respectful relationship from which both parties continue to benefit.

Australia Day in the city

BILL BELL
AUSTRALIA DAY COUNCIL OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The 2016 Australia Day Parade was one of the most vibrant and colourful parades to date. With more than 3000 participants from over 85 different nationalities, there was an array of music, dancing, magnificent costumes, vintage cars and bands - something for everyone. A crowd of over 14,000 people were there to watch the Parade before moving to Elder Park for the 21-Gun Salute, followed by a free concert and fireworks.

The Australia Day celebrations involved over 100 volunteers, each performing various tasks, such as parade marshalling, crowd marshalling, traffic controlling and building floats.
Bringing science to life in the classroom

OFA FITZGIBBONS
COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR, CSIRO

For the year three students at Unley Primary School, science experiments have been taken to new heights thanks to Michelle Vuaran. Michelle is a scientist and works with the school’s science teacher Eric Jankevics, bringing science to life in the classroom. The latest experiment had a hygiene emphasis and involved investigating bacteria present within the classroom. For Michelle, doing these experiments in the classrooms is a chance for her to share her enthusiasm for science related subjects with the next generation of scientists and innovative leaders.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects and skills are now considered essential to driving industry innovation in Australia. Yet there is increasingly more public discussion around the critical shortage of STEM skills and the declining participation rates of school students undertaking STEM subjects in school. The Scientists and Mathematicians in Schools (SMiS) program helps address this challenge.

As Australia’s largest skilled volunteering program for STEM professionals and STEM educators, the SMiS program offers participants the opportunity to make a positive difference to the education of Australian students from kindergarten to senior secondary. Managed by CSIRO, the program creates flexible partnerships by matching professionals and educators and providing ongoing support to build a collaborative partnership. This means partnerships leverage the expertise of each person within it to create classroom experiences not otherwise possible if each participant was acting alone. At Unley Primary School, bacteria experiments, making slime to look at polymers and making gummy worms, are just a few ways in which a STEM professional and teacher can showcase real-world contemporary science experiences for students.

For teachers like Eric, the program really gives educators a chance to build on the natural curiosity the children have about how the world works. Creating modern science experiences also helps to foster their critical thinking and problem solving skills, while at the same time, allowing them to have a lot of fun with science.

For professionals and scientists like Michelle, the benefits are many. “Seeing the fascination and awe in the face of the children as I show them a surface in their classroom which looks clean to the eye yet when they swab the surface and incubate the sample, there is in actual fact hundreds of bacteria present, is a real highlight for me. I am passionate about what I do and enjoy being able to inspire young students about science.”

Seeing the fascination and awe in the face of the children... is a real highlight for me. I am passionate about what I do and enjoy being able to inspire young students about science.
State Library Ambassadors

MARY FILSELL
SENIOR INFORMATION SERVICES OFFICER, STATE LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Amidst the swirl and colour of the Adelaide Fringe Festival, visitors taking a stroll down from North Terrace into the light-filled glass foyer of the State Library are impacted with an experience much more than just an escape from the summer heat. The volunteer Ambassadors of the State Library of South Australia are there to welcome everyone with warm, smiling faces and endless enthusiasm. Easily identifiable with their distinctive red iPads and lanyards, they are ready to help in directing people to locations within and beyond the Library, or offering spontaneous tours of our buildings and exhibitions. Their skilful interaction with our visitors provides an excellent wayfinding service to the local community and visiting travellers alike.

WHO ARE OUR AMBASSADORS?
The Ambassadors are a bright and vibrant group of enthusiastic and knowledgeable individuals covering a variety of backgrounds, ages and experiences. They are leaders, tour guides, storytellers, performers and helpful hosts. Ambassadors are dedicated as a whole to lifelong learning and take great pride in sharing their knowledge while helping visitors to experience the Library, meet the staff and access Library resources.

Our Ambassadors operate within an encouraging and inclusive mentoring culture, evident in the warmth shown to new members. Our Ambassadors enjoy their interaction with each other, the staff and our visitors which promotes a very inclusive and vibrant experience for all.

"...A feeling that what I do makes a real difference for the State Library. Feeling appreciated for the work we do, and of course the excellent camaraderie with the other Ambassadors and library staff..."

Our current team is a mixture of highly experienced and relatively new members with around 40% of Ambassadors having joined within the last three years. The newest member has been with us for only a few weeks, while the longest serving members have been with us since the program began in 2003.

It is rewarding to open people’s eyes to the treasures of the SLSA and enjoyable to receive genuine appreciation of your efforts.

HISTORY OF THE AMBASSADORS
SLSA underwent an intense period of redevelopment in 2003. The new building was released to the public and many changes had taken place to the physical layout and services offered by the Library. Rising to meet the challenge, the volunteer Friends of the State Library organised a small group of willing volunteers to meet, greet and show people where things were in the new Library during the first six weeks following the opening.

Not surprisingly, the public and the staff of the Library recognised the value that these wonderful people provided to the Library and advocated for the service to continue. Jo Chesher, the Library’s Volunteer Coordinator, took on the supervision and management of this group, building the program that we enjoy today and giving 13 years to the development of this service. After a recent restructure, The Ambassadors are now under the care of Mary Filsell, Senior Information Services Officer within the Library’s Customers team.

Our Ambassadors are essential in creating a place of community, where our visitors are encouraged to feel a sense of familiarity and ownership, and an understanding that The State Library of South Australia is their library to enjoy. We treasure our Ambassadors and the wonderful work they do for their State Library and the community. Thank you Ambassadors!

If this sounds like you, we invite you to submit an Expression of Interest via www.GoVolunteer.com.au. Enter “Ambassador” in the Keyword search and “Adelaide” in the location search.

See you soon at your State Library!
The Friends of the Larapinta Trail (FOLT) is a not-for-profit community group dedicated to the promotion, preservation and maintenance of this world class, long distance walking trail.

Established as an incorporated association, the FOLT now has over 300 members, who volunteer in a range of activities; including manning the Todd Mall Market information stall set up on the last Sunday of every month; helping to eradicate weeds on the trail; erecting and maintaining trail markers; painting and maintaining camp shelters; and helping to build new infrastructure.

The FOLT volunteers also assist in running our walking events on the trail, which is scheduled monthly during the trekking season (April-September).

Without the valuable contributions of our volunteer members, the Friends of the Larapinta Trail would cease to exist.
Reaching out to reduce harm

ALEXANDRA DAVIS
MARKETING TEAM LEADER, DRUG ARM AUSTRALASIA

Rebecca Corbett has been regularly volunteering with Drug ARM at the Warradale office in South Australia since November 2015. We recently sat down with Rebecca to find out more about her volunteering experiences.

WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO VOLUNTEER AT DRUG ARM?
At first I wasn’t sure if alcohol and other drug counselling was exactly what I wanted to do, however after attending the interview and then completing the training, I couldn’t have been more excited to start! I loved the mentality that dependency on a substance doesn’t define a person and that Drug ARM is a non-judgemental support counselling service.

WHAT KEEPS YOU MOTIVATED TO VOLUNTEER AT DRUG ARM?
The belief in people’s ability to make change is something I am passionate about. I also find that every day I am here, I learn more and more!

ARE THERE ANY SPECIAL MOMENTS AND OR FAVOURITE EXPERIENCES THAT YOU’VE HAD WITH DRUG ARM?
My favourite experiences actually happen on a regular basis! The one thing I love the most is when you’re working with a client and you see the tiniest of changes one by one add up and eventually the client begins to recognise little wins as big wins!

WHY SHOULD PEOPLE VOLUNTEER AT DRUG ARM?
People should volunteer at Drug ARM if they want to empower and be empowered by others. I find that no matter what, the team and supervisors are supportive and eager to help in any way they can. Responsibilities are often taken on in whole by the team, and no one is left without support. This definitely encourages an empowering environment and leaves you feeling ready to empower clients in a similar way.

ABOUT DRUG ARM
Drug ARM Australasia is a not-for-profit organisation committed to reducing the harms of alcohol and other drug use. Our organisation provides compassion and specialist care through a range of programs and services that include education, outreach, prevention and treatment.

People should volunteer at Drug ARM if they want to empower and be empowered by others.
It is hard to tell what Eldercare resident Elizabeth Blake and volunteer Ali Roach enjoy most about their friendship: the knitting or the comedy.

“Elizabeth has a wicked, wicked sense of humour and I have a wicked sense of humour so we just seem to click” says Ali.

Self-confessed ‘knitwit’ Elizabeth agrees. “We are a good pair.”

Elizabeth and Ali met two years ago. Ali had started volunteering at Eldercare’s Trowbridge House residential aged care facility in Adelaide and Elizabeth needed a favour.

“Elizabeth had some knitting and she wanted someone to sew it up… I said ‘yes’ and that’s how it started. Once a week, Elizabeth says ‘you need to come up to my room, I’ve got some knitting’.”

Elizabeth grew up surrounded by craft-loving aunties and learnt how to knit when she was in primary school. She continues to knit every day “hands permitting”.

Elizabeth has knitted shawls, scarves and bedspreads for family members and makes items for the Maylands Church of Christ which are donated to charity. She and Ali have also knitted blankets for residents in the Trowbridge House Memory Support Unit.

“I knitted and crocheted some blankets and Elizabeth thought she might as well do some too. Now they say ‘don’t make any more, you need to stop now until next winter!’” chuckles Ali.

2015 saw Elizabeth find a new outlet for her creations. She competed in the Royal Adelaide Show for the first time and knitted a blanket that blended the team colours of the Adelaide Crows and Port Power. True to form, Ali sewed up the edges.
Ali said Trowbridge House Lifestyle Coordinator Ritesh Sehdev encouraged Elizabeth to make the blanket ‘because he thought that would appeal to everyone’.

The blanket pleased the judges. It won first prize.

“I couldn’t believe it. I probably could have done one for years but I had never even thought of doing it,” says Elizabeth.

Elizabeth’s hands haven’t remained idle since her Royal Show win. She and Ali are busy working on a new blanket.

“Elizabeth’s so enthusiastic about what she does,” says Ali.

“She’s just got such a lovely sense of humour and she’s always smiling. We do have a special relationship and that’s through the knitting. I just love her.”

Eldercare is one of the largest and most experienced aged care, retirement living and home care providers in South Australia. Eldercare is a not-for-profit organisation operating throughout the greater Adelaide region and Yorke Peninsula.

Elizabeth’s so enthusiastic about what she does. She’s just got such a lovely sense of humour and she’s always smiling. We do have a special relationship and that’s through the knitting. I just love her.
Ensuring local history lives on

The Authority’s band of volunteers help research, develop and host guided tours of Adelaide’s iconic West Terrace Cemetery, which has now become a popular tourist attraction for local, interstate and international visitors.

Adelaide Cemeteries Authority Chief Executive Officer Robert Pitt paid tribute to the many unpaid helpers who have greatly contributed to the growing popularity of West Terrace Cemetery in recent years.

“We have such a fantastic group of loyal volunteers who have contributed so much of their time and effort in recent years to develop a range of guided and self-guided tours at West Terrace Cemetery,” said Mr Pitt.

“South Australia has such a rich history and many of the stories that make up the fabric of our great state can be found at the State Heritage listed cemetery. It really is important to preserve and share these fascinating tales with the current generation, and thanks to our devoted volunteers and the tours they lead, we’re doing exactly that.”

The Authority’s volunteers now lead eight separately themed guided tours through West Terrace Cemetery on a rotating basis every Tuesday and Sunday morning from 10.30am. Groups can also book private tours any day of the year.

In addition, innovative night tours are also conducted every Friday evening where visitors are treated to a theatrical sound and light experience – a first for South Australia.

“People who are prepared to give up their time and freely help the Authority are so critical to the ongoing operation of the Adelaide Cemeteries Authority and the range of exceptional tours we provide at West Terrace Cemetery every week,” said Mr Pitt.

“Many of our volunteers have been with us for almost a decade and have become integral contributors to the Authority and our cemeteries - West Terrace Cemetery, Enfield Memorial Park, Cheltenham Cemetery and Smithfield Memorial Park.

“We certainly owe them a great debt of gratitude.”

Many of our volunteers have been with us for almost a decade and have become integral contributors to the Authority and our cemeteries.
Free legal help

ED BUTLER
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER, JUSTICE CONNECT

Justice Connect’s Not-for-profit Law service has launched its online Information Hub for South Australia organisations. The Information Hub (www.nfplaw.org.au) has over 80 free, comprehensive legal resources covering common issues experienced by South Australian not-for-profit groups. A suite of new volunteering resources was developed with input from volunteer-involving groups and provides essential guidance to the sector in an easy-to-use format (available at www.nfplaw.org.au/volunteers).

Other topics covered by the Hub include risk management, fundraising, charity law, tax, employment law and mergers, and there are animated videos and webinars as well.

Justice Connect is a charity itself, and its Not-for-profit Law program works to help charities and not-for-profits navigate the law so that they can get better deliver their important services for the benefit of the community.

Celebrating diversity

DAVID JACQUIER
PROGRAM SUPPORT OFFICER, VOLUNTEERING SA&NT

Celebrating Culturally and Linguistically Diverse volunteers and volunteer coordinators in the Aged Care Sector.

In 2014 volunteers across Australia contributed a staggering 43.4 million hours of involvement within the health sector. Volunteers add value to the many services provided in the aged care sector, including those of The Commonwealth Home Support Program, which provides the elderly with access to services allowing them to continue living at home. Services such as meals, transport to appointments, home maintenance, and social support are critical.

Our Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) elderly often experience specific needs and extra challenges as they age. In August 2015, a number of South Australian CALD aged care organisations and their volunteers, Volunteering SA&NT, and the SA Migration Museum, celebrated an exhibition which acknowledged the enormous contribution that volunteers have given over the years, and also the best practice support given to the volunteers by the agencies.

The exhibition focused on food and meal delivery, social support and transportation. The participating agencies were Bene, The Greek Orthodox Community of South Australia, The Greek Welfare Centre, ANFE (Associazione Nazionale Famiglie degli Emigrati), Chinese Welfare Services, PISA (Pasti Italiani e Servizi per Anziani) and CO.AS.IT. (SA).

IN THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY, WHEN A NONNA PLACES A PLATE OF FOOD BEFORE YOU, THEY ARE GIVING YOU MORE THAN JUST FUEL FOR YOUR BODY, THEY ARE GIVING YOU NOURISHMENT FOR YOUR SOUL.

A SERIES OF POSTERS WERE DISPLAYED AT THE EXHIBITION.

VOLUNTEERING SA&NT
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Dr Fiona Kerr, a neural and systems complexity specialist at the University of Adelaide, is investigating some extraordinary neurophysiological effects that arise during human-to-human interactions, with a particular interest in the effects of touch and eye gaze on healing.

According to Dr Kerr, simply looking at someone can have amazing therapeutic outcomes.

“If I’m feeling anxious, a sympathetic gaze from a person I like and trust can lead to a form of eye contact called ‘retinal lock’,” she explains. “One of my retinas locks with a retina of the other person, which synchronises the right hemispheres of our brains and alters activity in my amygdala, having a calming effect on my emotional state. No robot or machine can do that.”

The retinal lock effects are reinforced by related physiological changes in the body such as increased levels of oxytocin release that promote positive feelings and lower anxiety, and decreased levels of cortisol release – cortisol being a hormone that can bring on feelings of stress and negativity. The overall result is a less worried person with increased trust, empathy and positivity of attitude.

These outcomes occur whether the situation is one of caring for an ill person, an aged person or stressed family member, friend or colleague. The caregiver, moreover, also experiences a boost in positivity of mood and outlook as a result of the interaction.

The look of Neuroscience

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY A PERSON FEELS BETTER AFTER SOMEONE MAKES CONTACT WITH A TOUCH OR EYE GAZE? MANY PEOPLE FIND THESE EFFECTS TO BE REAL, AND SCIENTISTS ARE NOW COMING TO UNDERSTAND HOW THEY OCCUR.

TONY COX

“I SMILE AND YOU SMILE

Neuroscience can also help explain why people meeting for the first time often develop strong positive feelings for each other and a sense of having bonded after just this one encounter. Mirror neurons play a key role here.

“These neurons develop early, and it is thought they help us understand other people’s actions,” explains Dr Kerr. “They fire in response to actions we observe in others, and interestingly, in the same way when we perform the same action. They help us to understand other’s intentions and they increase our empathy for how others are feeling, which can bring about the kind of situation where we find that smiles are contagious. The fact that a subset of mirror neurons exist for smiling and laughter, but not negative expressions, suggests that the human brain has been expressly hard-wired by evolution to help us connect and bond.”

Another type of neuron, called a spindle neuron, comes into play to enhance the trust and bonding process when people are directly interacting. These connect the front of the brain to other areas that are related to task, emotion and empathy. Found only in the brains of primates and elephants – all of which have long-term and often complex social relationships – they enable individuals to read and respond to social nuances, thus facilitating the growth of trust and bonding.

A further process involves a phenomenon called dynamic resonance, or oscillation, which arises during close physical interactions such as dancing, rocking a baby and walking with someone. “By oscillating together, we reinforce positive body language cues given by the other, and when movement is included, such as walking or dancing, we also give off ‘feel-good’ chemicals like dopamine that further promote the bonding process,” says Dr Kerr.

Another curiously wondrous outcome of face-to-face interactions is that they lead to new neural networks being built in a person’s brain relating to the other person. “We end up literally carrying around a bit of someone else in our heads,” as Dr Kerr puts it.
A large part of the human body and a number of regions in the brain are devoted to sensing the many different types and aspects of touch. These create a range of stimuli and emotions in the person being touched and often also in the person touching. Touch administered by a trusted person in a caring and sympathetic manner, known as affective touch, has neural effects that can lead to reduced pain and stress, lower blood pressure, strengthening of various immune system responses and even increased speed of wound healing. There is growing evidence that such interaction can also help remedy auto-immune disorders and a number of stress-related diseases that plague the developed world.

In one neurological study, brain scans of women experiencing pain showed significant drops in activity in brain areas associated with fear, threat and pain when touched on the hand by their husband. Similar but lesser effects were recorded when a stranger did the touching.

While the effects of both gentle touch and eye contact have been shown to be real, the neurophysiological mechanisms involved are not yet well understood. They are known to include the release of chemicals such as melatonin, serotonin and oxytocin that can elevate feelings of wellbeing. As well, chemical reactions occur that stop or counter the effects of cortisol and other stress-related hormones, enabling the immune and bodily repair systems to function more effectively.

Dr Kerr plans to improve on the state of knowledge here through work she is doing to quantify the effects of touch and gaze.

“Certain types of nerve fibres involved in touch, called ‘c-fibres’, are directly linked to emotional parts of the brain. In a trusting relationship, even patting someone gently on the arm and looking at them when speaking creates positive neurophysiological changes. We really are hard-wired to connect, and no machine is capable of creating the wonderful changes other humans can in our bodies, hearts and minds,” she says.

If I’m feeling anxious, a sympathetic gaze from a person I like and trust can lead to a form of eye contact called ‘retinal lock’...having a calming effect on my emotional state. No robot or machine can do that.
Contribute to the next edition of Vitality.

Email editor@volunteeringsa-nt.org.au with your stories and photographs.