



# WARM BLANKETS FOR EVERYONE

## Latest News & Updates

DEC 2023



### OPENING ADDRESS

**Hello & Merry Christmas to all Warm Blankets volunteers,**

Hello Warm Blanketeers,

What can I say about 2023?

We, i.e. Di, Dave and myself have done about 10 speaking engagements at local social and community clubs. We have gathered much interest, and goods, plus several new volunteers. This is getting our charity 'out there' into the local arena, which many of us hear as we move around in our own social circles.

We've been successful with a grant from IMB Bank to the tune of \$4000, and I thank Dave for his submission and success. We have also applied for the Shortland Volunteers Grant and are awaiting a reply. I again soldiered forth, submitting an application for the Lake Mac Environment Grant and 'here's hoping'. Two years ago we were successful in obtaining \$2,500 under this grant.

Dave has had a very busy three months, collating all the gathered information regarding our polar fleece usage. We thank him for this and are pleased that he has been able to advise by cutting the length of blankets by a few inches, we can make one more extra blanket per roll of fleece. Please discuss with Dave any questions you might have. Each blanket costs around \$20 to make, so all savings are important. The purchase of polar fleece is primarily from the grant funds, and for this reason we need to continue to apply, and hopefully receive. It is a never-ending challenge. Fleece costs annually are approximately \$20,000. Thank you to Phil Skinner, treasurer, who keeps us on the 'straight and narrow' with our budget.

We are really sad that Di Ebert, our wonderful Distribution Co-ordinator is hanging up her hat at the end of the year. Di has done exceptional work for three years and deserves a well-earned break. She will continue as a volunteer at Warm Blankets using her expert patch working skills to make toppers. Thanks heaps Di for your contribution, and although I have known you for about ten years, I have really enjoyed working with you for the last three.

Warm Blankets welcomes Donna Green to the role of Distribution Co-ordinator, as well as her team of packers, Laurice Remington and Sharyn Borg of Friday team, and Ruth Dewar and Cheryl Ewart from Wednesday/Thursday teams. Thank you everyone for putting your hands up for these roles.

The Fund Raising Team, what do we say, Wow. You do a magnificent job raising much needed funds for the work of Warm Blankets For Everyone. The Fund Raising funds primarily keep up the maintenance expenses of the charity, like electricity, rent, repairs, cleaning and replacements. We could not continue without their great work. Thanks also to those volunteers who 'help on the day', at Fund Raising events.

I must also thank the Board members of Warm Blankets For Everyone. There have been some hard decisions this year, and we have, we hope, made the right ones. Thanks Susan Radcliffe our hard-working secretary, and all other members who 'have their say'. It's a positive team.

On a sad note we have lost a couple more of our volunteers, Gillian Fehlberg and Sandy Stephen. Both these volunteers made positive inputs into the project, and leave us with happy memories. Sandy was my very special friend, who was so supportive of Warm Blankets in the very early days, sewing at both my home and at Tonee's, before we moved to the Workshop.

A great bonus we have picked up in the second half of 2023 is a monthly cleaning team, Chloe and Steve Adams. This big clean once a month, is proving very positive, and we at the workshop are noticing the difference.

Sue Bardsley  
Co-founder/Chairperson  
Warm Blankets For Everyone

## **TEAM LEADER REPORTS**

### **Tuesday (Rebecca Wett)**

Our group has grown to 8, so if someone goes on holidays there are still plenty of us to carry on pinning blankets, top sewing blankets as well as cutting and sewing blanket tops. Carolyn has been busy adding new people to our group. The Tuesday group is a very productive group. Most of us are usually there for 4 hours. We have a good mixture of talents from sewing, to pinning blankets and selecting material for what is in demand.

We all take turns bringing in morning tea. This is the highlight of the day catching up with everyone's holidays. As well as discussing fundraising events that are coming up. The Tuesday group is very supportive of all our Fundraising events.

I will have to say that I am looking forward to having a break over the Christmas and New Year period. I know my group are looking forward to catching up with family and friends. Wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday.

### **Wednesday AM (Julie Farquhar)**

There was a poignant Australian Story episode recently, looking at Dr Greg Smith a once homeless man who has gone on to make so much more of his life.

At WB the Wednesday Morning team of Margaret, Margaret, Judy, Christine, Jill, Rosalie and Julie try to make a difference to peoples' lives. We love to look at the colours and materials used in making blankets that reflect our care. While we cannot imagine what it is to be homeless, we try to give our clients a sense of pride when they wrap one of our blankets around themselves. It is important to us - as it is to every team - that there is quality in our work. Over the past few months, we have sewn, pinned and created blankets that hopefully will be special for those that receive them.

As a team we have become firm friends and are very thankful to WBF E for introducing us. On a personal note, it is so remarkable to be around such a diverse, interesting and fun-loving group of women who can all cook incredible morning teas.

Have a safe and relaxing break.

### **Wednesday PM (Christine Gill)**

Another year almost over and we are all ready for a break from the workshop.

It has been another busy year...pinning toppers to fleece, overlocking then top sewing blankets. We have had a diversion from blanket sewing in the last few weeks with Margaret, Chris and Robyn cutting out and making bunting to sell at the Christmas Market. Joan and Susan making durable bags, from heavy duty material unsuitable for blankets, to be used for delivering our blankets (a cost saving measure as the bags we have purchased do not last long before handles break and fabric wears out). Margaret, Rhonda-Lea, and Robyn sewing

and crocheting knitted squares together. Holding the fort with blanket production...Shez and Ruth pinning, Pam sewing toppers to fleece and top stitching blankets and not forgetting Pat, who for some strange reason, loves ironing!

And while we are all busy with our separate tasks we manage to enjoy each other's company, having a chat discussing all manner of subjects and having a laugh!

One last thing...special thanks to Ruth who spoils us all with her very yummy afternoon treats...thank you so much Ruth!

A very Happy Christmas to everyone, enjoy time with your families and friends and stay safe...looking forward to seeing you all next year.

#### **Thursday (Chez Ewart)**

Firstly welcome back from her travels to our trusty leader Sue, and many thanks to Di for her stellar help in holding the fort in Sue's absence.

Thursday afternoon continues to run smoothly.

The pinners have been remeasuring to correct new standard and resizing where necessary. The overlocking is continuing and the turning of blankets is ongoing. We are missing the work of some of our home sewers though. Some of the ladies have been working on preparing the bunting for the Xmas market stall. Julie is doing a fabulous job remaking donated pieces into toppers.

We always have a happy afternoon, sharing many laughs and of course coffee and Ruth's fabulous treats.

#### **Friday (Helen Clarke)**

We have had a good run over the past few months. There was an appeal for dark blankets for distribution to people living on the street which involved every team putting together the required rugs and it is my understanding that this has been fulfilled now. It is good to know that we can all be flexible and take on something that we may not normally do to complete a project.

With the end of the year getting very close I had a look at our various rooms and could see that we had a large number of bags loaded up with rugs that needed to be joined together, top stitched and labels sewn on so today we decided to get these out of the storage room and onto the "done" shelves. That went very well and I feel we accomplished a lot. We seem to have many toppers but getting them finished is the main concern.

Our team members are pretty consistent in their attendance while one member keeps flitting off on overseas cruises. We had to say farewell to Anne for a few months while she helps out her family in Cairns when her new grandchild arrives.

On behalf of the Friday Team I would like to wish all volunteers a Happy Christmas and Healthy New Year.



We are delighted to have been awarded a grant from the IMB Bank Community Foundation for our Warm Blankets for Everyone project. It is also fantastic to be part of such an inspirational group of people and organisations that are making genuine changes in our communities.”

Since 1999 IMB Bank Community Foundation has supported more than 900 not-for-profit community projects that help our communities, with 55 more projects funded in 2023. The full announcement and information on the successful projects and the Foundation is available on the IMB Bank website at [IMB Community Foundation Projects - IMB Bank](#)



## Comfort for Those in Need

### WARM BLANKETS FOR EVERYONE

Warm Blankets for Everyone (WBFE) is a charitable organisation, dedicated to crafting warm blankets from recycled materials for vulnerable individuals in the community. With over 100 volunteers, WBFE distributes around 2,250 blankets annually through local charities. Foundation funds purchase polar fleece for backing, a critical component for creating these comforting blankets.

Please visit the WBFE website to see the link to the video of successful applicants. [www.wbfe.org](http://www.wbfe.org)

## FUNDRAISING REPORT (Rebecca Wett)

### Fundraising Team Report for December 2023

It has been a very big year of Fundraising.

We started the year with our Movie Matinee at Lake Cinemas Boolaroo.

We had a couple of Market days at Speers Point, the Christmas in July High Tea, the Fashion Parade and the TAFE Dinner.

Now in early December we have the Christmas Twilight Markets at Warners Bay.

At the beginning of November 2023, the Fundraising Team has raised over \$15,000 so far this year. The Fundraising Team has learnt what Fundraising events have raised a reasonable amount of money and what events weren't worth the time or effort. This will be discussed by the Fundraising Team early next year. The Fundraising Team will be meeting at the beginning of next year to organise our Fundraising events for 2024. I would like to invite each Team leader or a representative from each Team to come along to this meeting to give input and suggestions for next year's fundraising events.

We recently held a Volunteers Afternoon Tea at St Luke's Uniting Church. We had 48 Volunteers turn up to a beautiful afternoon tea. This event was organised to thank everyone for all their hard work throughout the year.

At the Afternoon Tea Dave Ebert talked about how much it costs to run WBFE. How important the Fundraising money is. Dave also spoke about how many blankets we made this year and who we send the blankets to. Helen Clarke and Doug Mogg entertained us with a couple of songs and asked everyone to join in singing some Christmas songs.

### Photos of the Volunteers Afternoon Tea





## **COMING EVENTS**

### **1. Christmas Twilight Markets**

The Fundraising Team has one more event before the Christmas break and that is the Christmas Twilight Markets at Warners Bay Foreshore on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December from 3pm to 8pm.

### **2. Christmas Luncheon**

There are still plenty of seats available for the Christmas Luncheon at Babbingtons, see the flyer below. Please contact me if you would like to come.



## Warm Blankets For Everyone Christmas Luncheon

**WHEN:** 12pm | Friday 15th December

**WHERE:** Babbingtons Bar & Grill | Apollo International Hotel  
290 Pacific Highway, Charlestown

A choice of a 2-course meal (\$39) or a 3-course meal is (\$49).

The Cubby House raffle will be drawn plus plenty of great raffles to be won on the day. There are limited seats so book in early.

Please make a booking to Rebecca Wett  
on 0477 292 794 or email [rebeccawett@tpg.com.au](mailto:rebeccawett@tpg.com.au)



At our Christmas Luncheon we will be drawing our major raffle for this year, the Cubby House that Julie Farquhar and the Wednesday Morning Team made.

### Cubby House Raffle Prize



### GUEST SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS & WORKSHOP VISITS

Since the last Newsletter we have presented to the Women on Mondays group at the Warners Bay Uniting Church

There was a lot of interest in what Warm Blankets does and the group was amazed at the wonderful blankets that our volunteers produce.

## **DISTRIBUTIONS (Di Ebert)**

Well its been another very big year for the Distribution Team!

Since 1 February this year we have supplied over 2,700 blankets. This is around 475 more than this time last year. That is made up of 1,934 Fleece backed blankets, 146 woollen blankets & 613 crochet / knitted blankets. In addition to the blankets we have provided 590 Library, Toiletry & Shoulder Bags, 1,095 Beanies, Gloves & Scarfs, 180 Jumpers & Shawls

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

- We Care Connect Wyong – 733
- Food not Bombs – 230
- Christ Church Cathedral - 240
- Survivor's R US – 127
- Community of Hope - 60
- Friends with Dignity - 78
- Mum's Cottage – 55
- Macquarie Life Church – 76
- Cooranbong Community Service Centre - 70
- East Lakes Family Support - 73
- Allambi Youth - 65
- STRAS Belmont Hospital (Short term residential accommodation service) – 76
- WHO's – We Help Ourselves Men & Women's Drug & Alcohol Rehabilitation Cessnock – 200
- Northern Territory Communities – 160

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

On another note, as some of you may know, I am stepping down from the Distribution Co-Ordinator role. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in the role and very much appreciated all the support given to me by the WBF team. Donna Green will be stepping in as my replacement and I will spend the first couple of months next year supporting Donna.

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

## **VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK**

### **Introducing Donna Green – WBF Distribution Coordinator**

I was born, raised and educated in Lithgow NSW. After completing the School Certificate, and the Day Secretarial course at Lithgow Technical college I commenced work at Lithgow City Council. After a few years at Council, I went to England with 2 of my girlfriends for an extended stay where we travelled Europe and worked in London. During my time living and working in London my boyfriend/now husband Paul, also from Lithgow, joined me and we continued to work and travel more of England, Europe and America before returning home to live in Bondi and Wiley Park, both of us working for State Rail.

After we married in Burwood NSW and having our son, we moved with State Rail to Orange NSW. We had our daughter and called Orange NSW home for 31 years. My husband continued to work for State Rail and later AusPost. I left full time work with State Rail to raise the children but continued working part time in Insurance and Real Estate until they went to school, then moving back into fulltime employment with the Dept. of Education. After both our children left Orange to pursue Careers and University opportunities, so did we. We have lived in Blacksmiths now for 8 years after transferring to the coast with both of our jobs.



We have been enjoying the local area and all that it offers, it has been a brilliant move and since we both retired in 2021, have had more time to join clubs, groups and enjoy 4 of our grandchildren who live in Caves Beach. Our other grandson lives in Brisbane who we see regularly.

I love dancing, knitting, crocheting, entertaining and socialising.

I am really looking forward to being involved with such a wonderful organisation as Warm Blankets for Everyone and meeting and getting to know as many volunteers as possible.

Donna

## CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

It is always great to get positive feedback from the organisations we supply with our Blankets. The following was received from **Christ Church Cathedral**.

Dear Di, Sue and the Wonderful Team of Warm Blankets for Everyone,  
Last Sunday, in the torrential rain, we had a young lady come to the kitchen door, frozen and drenched. She had found herself homeless and her old sleeping bag had leaked. She wondered if we had something to wrap around her for warmth. I asked one of our volunteers to go to our blanket cupboard and to hand her one of your beautiful blankets. I am only sorry you were not there to see her reaction. She could not believe what she was being given and I noticed her lovingly nurse her blanket as she ate her lunch. It was her greatest treasure. Your ministry to the less fortunate is invaluable and we are so grateful you accepted us as one of your charities. May you all receive many blessings

*Suzanne Evans and Andrew Traill*

## GENERAL

A reminder to all of the Christmas Closedown period will be from **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023 to Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024**.

A big Thank You to **BAS Excavation & Plant Hire** for the use of their storage shed. We are using the BAS shed to store over 120 blankets ready for delivery to We Help Ourselves (WHO's) in Cessnock in February ready for their next intake. **BAS** is a local Belmont small business who specialise in concreting, driveways and paths and landscaping work. They can be contacted on 0434 619500.

