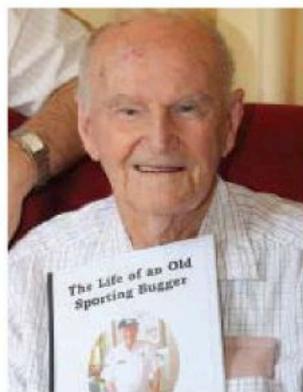
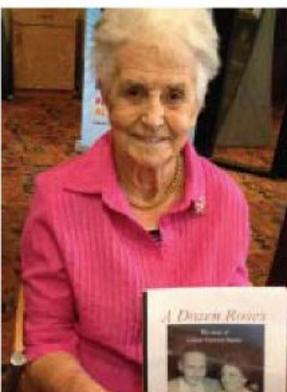
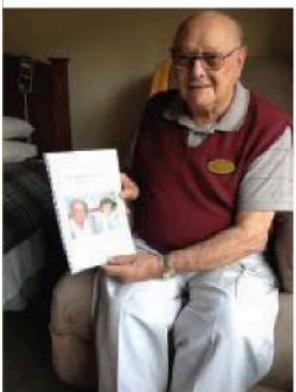




beyond words} celebrating life stories
annual report
2013

www.beyondwords.org.au

Beyond Words is an initiative of
The Biography Program
ABN 12 153 358 313



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Our New Name



beyond words} celebrating life stories

Incorporated as a charitable organisation in 2011, *The Biography Program* received seed funding in June 2012 to run a pilot project in aged care. This pilot has been successfully completed, and with our methodology and business model tested, and a core team in place, our new identity is born. From the 1st of January 2014 we will be known as *Beyond Words*.

While the name is new, our vision, values and the outcomes we deliver remain unchanged

Why Beyond Words?

The value and impact of our work extends beyond words.

Our new name more accurately reflects our values and the warmth and human care we bring to our work, and is more reflective of our brand and the outcomes we deliver. As we seek to raise our profile further and attract new supporters and partners, we feel our new brand provides a better insight into who we are.

While the published biographies we co-create with our clients are a permanent legacy of a life lived, these biographies are a by-product of a more valuable therapeutic *process* of *story-telling*, enabled by empathetic listening. While there is often detail shared that is not included in the final published biographies, it is the process of personal reflection and talking about ones' life that is most valuable. Our new name also recognizes this value, and the positive impact that extends beyond the life of the author.

Our Logo

The brace, or curly bracket, not only signifies the outline of an open book turned on its side, but is used in poetry and music to mark joined lines, or to signify movement in a particular direction.

We have chosen classic typewriter typeface that is textured to symbolize the many hues and imperfections that make a person's life unique.

Our Vision, Mission & Values

The world that doesn't exist yet

Our vision is to create a world where the life stories of older people are known by the communities in which they live, and are valued, affirmed and celebrated.

In this world older people are able to reflect, find a new perspective and purpose in expressing what is most important; and feel whole knowing that they have lived a rich life, made up of a tapestry of light, dark and colourful moments. Their families have a deep sense of connection, empathy and respect for their parents and grandparents that endures in life and beyond.

Generational boundaries dissolve through the dialogue about life, history and how the past is connected with our present and future hopes. We all have a greater sense of place in the world and connection to what has come before, and a deeper sense of identity and belonging to a shared history that is co-created.

Our Values

Beyond Words strives to create a culture where our values are reflected in everything we do – our methodology, the language we use, the stories we tell ourselves, and our work practices, processes and rituals.

Our **openness** to diversity allows us to celebrate and affirm the varied and unique life stories that make up our shared experience.

We strive to have the **compassion** to be kind to ourselves so that we are able to give fully to our work. We support people who want to help others. We listen with our hearts, as well as our ears.

We strive for **excellence** in the work we do in supporting each other.

We strive for stories that capture the essence of our clients' personhood – created through **authentic** relationships between biographers and clients.

We believe the most valuable gift we can give each other is our **time** and presence, especially during times of great personal change such as admission to a nursing home, loss of independence, illness and end of life.

We strive to be a program that is **inclusive** and recognise that older persons should have the opportunity to tell their story regardless of their financial situation – this is why clients do not bear the cost of the service and why we invite donations to support our work.

We work *with* individuals and organisations in collaborative **partnership**. We are privileged to form unique partnerships with our clients while joining with others in the community to provide continuous and responsible care and support in this growing sector.

Our Volunteer Support Team



Our Board



Ray Cummings is a qualified lawyer and was partner and owner at *Pitcher Partners* accounting firm from 1996 – 2011. He is a qualified lawyer and is currently Consultant – Tax Consulting for *Pitcher Partners* and Founder of *Greenoak Advisory*.



Francis Icasiano was a volunteer biographer with the original palliative care service. In 2011 he completed *The School for Social Entrepreneurs* and was awarded Project Achievement of the Year for setting up *The Biography Program*. Francis is also CEO and Coordinator of Volunteers.



Sue Gherdovich is currently Older Adults Program Leader for *beyondblue*. Prior to this she was Manager of Community Programs at the Sydney-based *Black Dog Institute* and has held senior policy roles in several federal government agencies, including the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission* in Sydney.

Our Patron



Jenny Kearney, OAM is the creator of the original biography service under *Eastern Palliative Care*. For 20 years she was previously Executive Director of *Open Doors*, a community-based counselling and education program.

CEO & Coordinator of Volunteers

Francis Icasiano has been Project Manager for large government funded projects in aged and palliative care, organized a professional conference and published *Affirming Life – a guide for family and friends with loved ones in aged care*. Through this work he has established a network of supporters and partners in the aged care sector and in 2013 completed the *School for Social Entrepreneurs Accelerator Program*.

Project Officer

Ann Yii brings over thirty years experience in business operations in the private, corporate and NFP sectors.

Probono Operations

We have been honoured to work with the following individuals who have provided probono assistance respectively in bookkeeping, rebranding/design, communication strategy, short film production, and legal trademarking: Sven Joschke (HLB Mann Judd), Emma Hutton, Lachlan Conboy, Malcolm Gunn, Karina Jagoe, Tine Pia Jensen, Chiang Zeijing, Lisa Egan (K & L Gates).

CEO Report

Word by word each life story takes shape building on each unique memory of the past.

Often during significant milestones in our lives it is the most intangible matter of life that we sense, the threads that tie the various parts of our lives together, and the people who inhabit each chapter. Sometimes the detail that does not get into the final biographies is the most powerful for our clients to share. It is the story between the lines, and beyond the words, which carries the greatest meaning.

We are a community of volunteer biographers who listen to our client's stories, and through our presence a gift is born for our clients, their families and communities, and future generations.

In 2013 we set up our operational systems, monitored, learnt, and refined our key processes, consolidated our partnerships, captured key outcomes and developed a plan to transition our business model. It is fortunate that we have received funding support from: The Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, The Trust Company, The Funding Network, The English Foundation and The Department of Sustainability, all of which enabled us to not only establish the initiative, but to complete our one year pilot project.

While the deep and sometimes long-term rippling effects of our work are difficult to capture, anonymous client surveys are overwhelmingly positive and each 'life-story case' represents many more beneficiaries, including the client, their family and friends, aged care staff, the nursing home community, the broader community, and future generations yet to be born.

The most valuable thing we can give is our time and we have completed 18 life-story cases representing a total of 1200 hours (32 full-time weeks), donated by volunteer biographers. As we continue to build capacity this number will grow.

We thank our early supporters for their part in writing our story so far, and look forward to turning the page to 2014 and beyond.

Francis Icasiano
Chief Executive Officer
Beyond Words

Coordinator of Volunteers Report }

Our initiative exists to serve the clients that we work with, and this would not be possible without the work of our volunteer biographers – all undertaken with careful loving attention to detail, with the bulk of the work completed behind the scenes.

This year we have had the privilege to witness the growth in biographers experiencing the joy in their work and overcoming the various challenges that come with it. Facilitating the life story of another is not a quick process, and volunteer biographers are required to be present in their listening, sensitive to the feelings underpinning what is being said, and mindful of different and dynamic family relationships.

As we work with a vulnerable population and must often navigate complex personal boundaries, providing training and ongoing supervision to our team of volunteer biographers is essential. In 2013 we:

- Established clear processes for biography referrals in partnership with aged care staff
- Trained ten volunteer biographers and provided one-on-one ongoing supervision
- Conducted four volunteer in-services sessions to provide peer support and ongoing training to volunteers who operate as sole workers
- Had the opportunity for our volunteers to attend a memorial service to honour those clients who have passed away
- Established an Editing Buddy System enabling biographers to support each other in the final stages of publication
- Monitored and refined core processes supporting volunteers, clients, families and aged care partners
- Held our first Christmas lunch for our volunteer biography and support team

We are very proud of what has been achieved this year by our volunteer biographer team, and what has been learnt along the way.

Francis Icasiano
Coordinator of Volunteers
Beyond Words

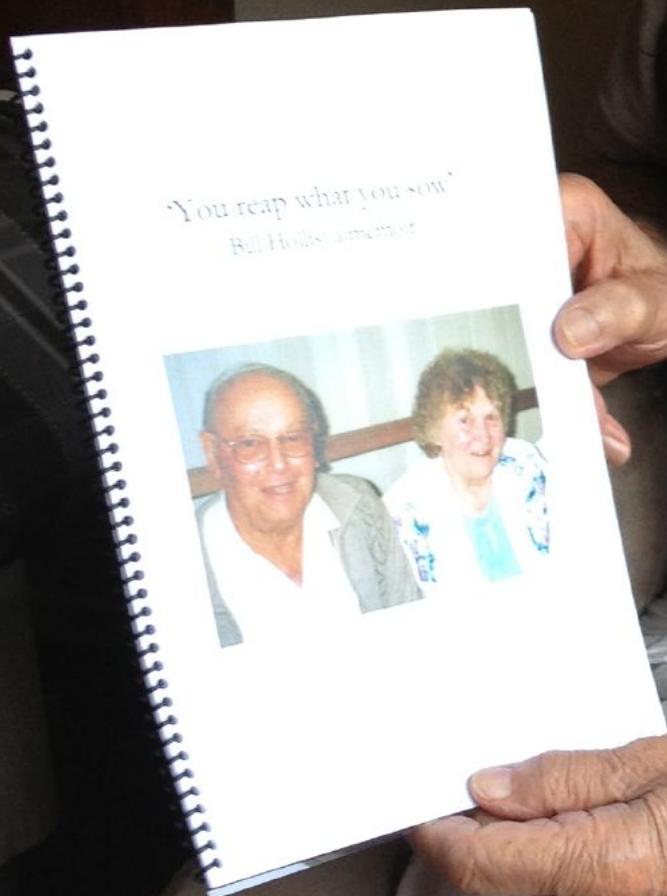
A Lifelong Love Affair

In 1942, as young soldier Bill Hollis was heading off to serve in Papua New Guinea he threw a note out the train window asking for someone to write to a lonely soldier.

That note landed in the hands of a 14-year old girl, who took it home, where her parents decided it was better for her older daughter Joan to write and comfort the soldier. After 18 months of corresponding they were able to meet and were married shortly after. Bill and his now late wife were able to celebrate their 65 year wedding anniversary.

Bill was able to celebrate his incredible life through Beyond Words and the help of his volunteer biographer Fleur.

"We always went out together. The only thing I did on my own was to go fishing, and sometimes I took her too."

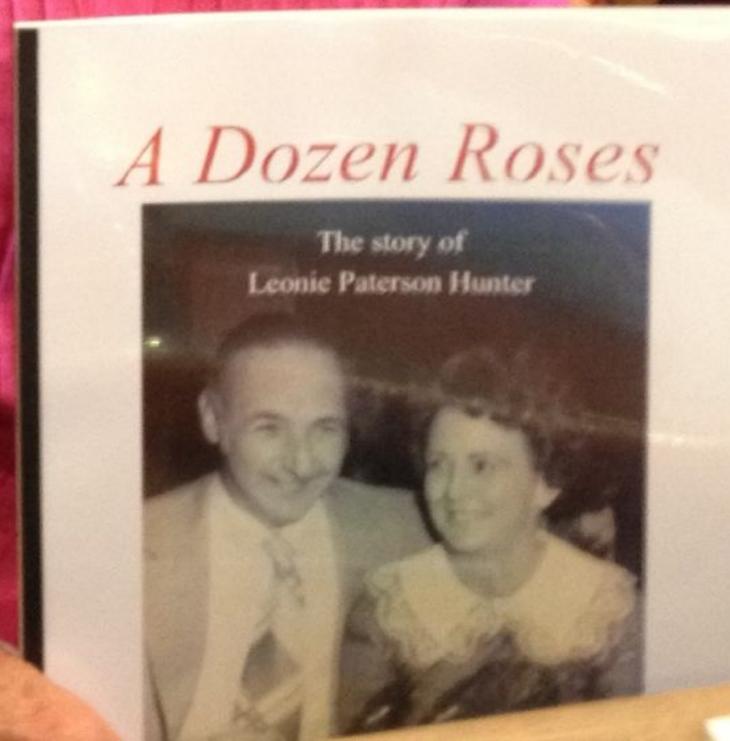


With the help of her biographer Carole, Leonie was able to celebrate her life story in print. We all have a story to tell, in her life Leonie:

- Served crumpets to the President of Japan
- Baked a leadlight fruitcake for the Prime Minister Gough Whitlam (Gough loved it, took the leftovers home and asked for the recipe to give to his wife!)

Leonie celebrated the launch of her biography at the Bayswater Hotel where her grandson works. As Leonie is mostly blind, her volunteer came up with the idea to create an audiobook CD which she can listen to in her room.

“If other residents get as much enjoyment out of it as I have then I would thoroughly recommend it.”



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*“I’m finding my life
sooo interesting!!!”*

-Audrey

beyond words}

*I love the biography,
I like to read it
because it reminds
me of myself "*
-Audrey



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A Good Life

98 year old Harry remembers...

For Harry, our first client to complete their life story, Beyond Words was a chance to write his story for his children, grandchildren and also his five great-grandchildren.

“There was a few sad occasions among the good times, but you have to expect that at 98. I’ve had a good life.”

“I really enjoyed the volunteer’s company and telling my stories. It’s about memories. I go back through my life, back to the day I got married, to the day my wife kissed me for the first time.”

What Families Say } }

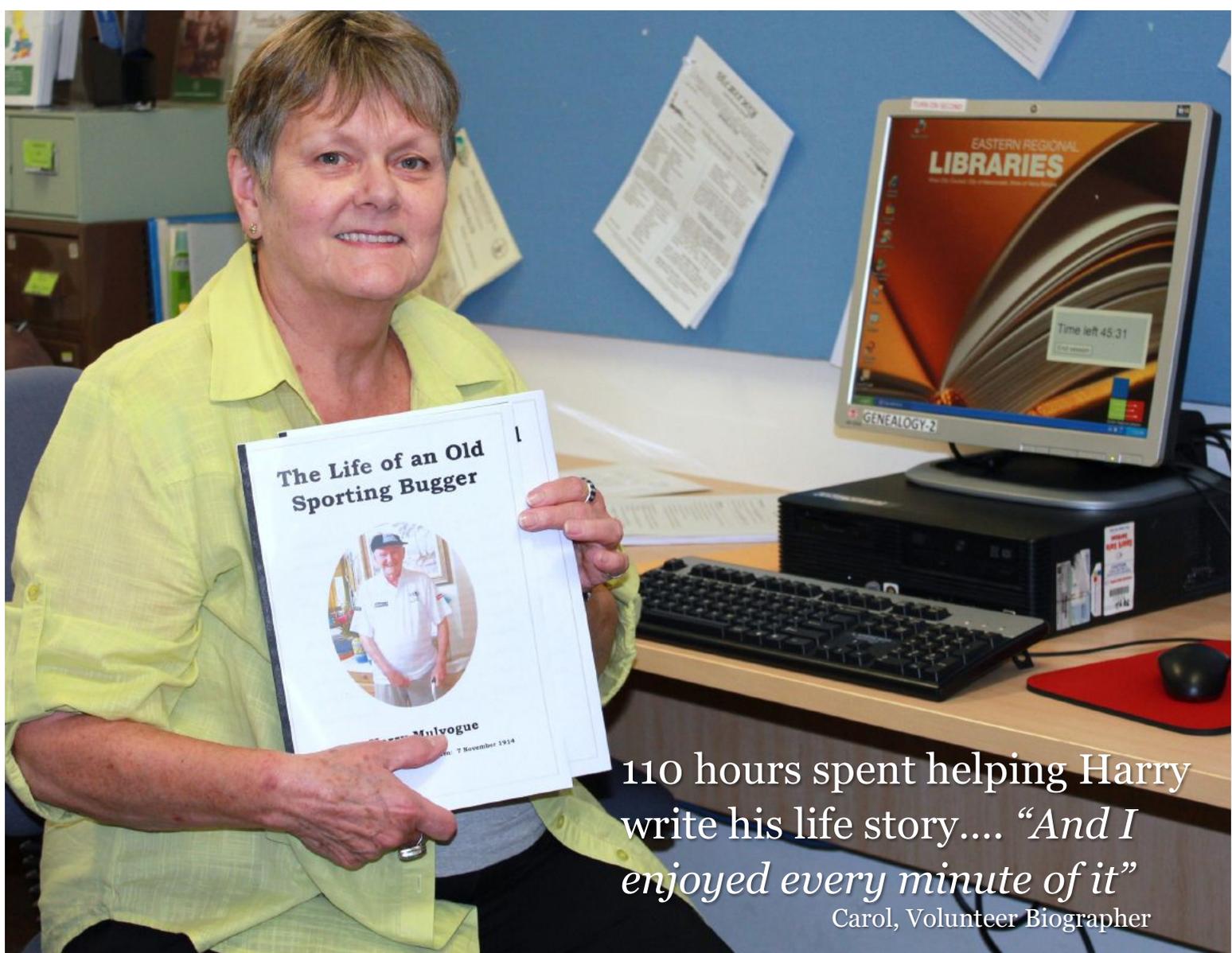
“It’s a very valuable thing to do for people who don’t normally get the opportunity to reflect on what’s happened to them... you really do understand what an incredible life you’ve had.”

Kevin, Harry’s Son

“It makes him feel proud. Proud of his life and what he’s achieved.”

Gwendoline, Harry’s Daughter

beyond words }



110 hours spent helping Harry write his life story... *"And I enjoyed every minute of it"*
Carol, Volunteer Biographer

Over the past year I have worked with four clients, all different, wonderful people with great stories to tell.

The joy my clients have felt working with me at our weekly sessions has been evident and the handing over of the published biography, their sharing with family and friends a truly satisfying achievement for them.

My first client passed away a few months ago and I was told by another resident of the same facility how proud he was of his biography. This feedback was most rewarding. It is a privilege to be able to assist in the writing of a client's story and their pride in the outcome is a true testament to the value of the program.

This work continues to be an amazing, fulfilling experience and I value and appreciate the help, friendship and camaraderie of my fellow volunteers and the support staff.

Carol Walker
Volunteer Biographer



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Biographers Report



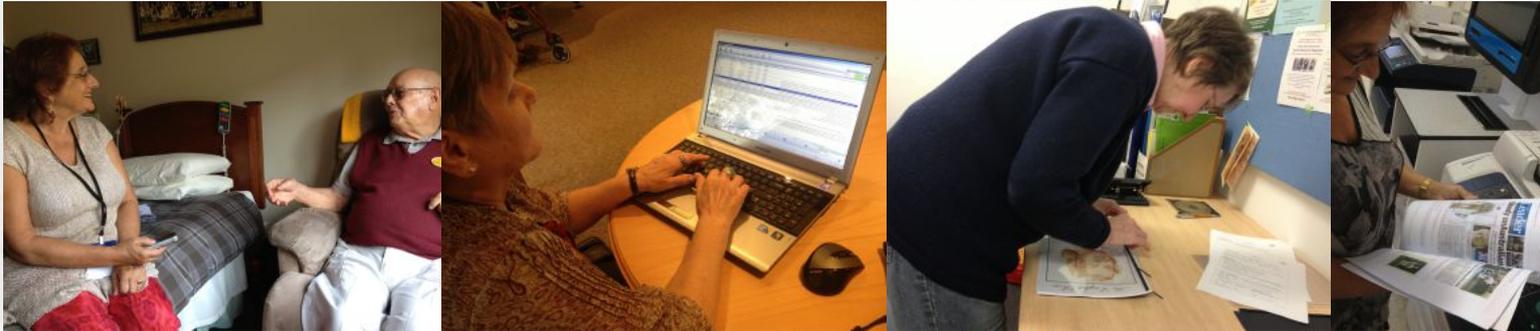
It's been a privilege to work with my clients and write up their biographies. There are multiple rewards in the process. All my clients enjoyed the space they were given to talk, to have someone listen to them, to reflect on their lives - both the good times and the difficult ones.

In the retirement village the residents are well cared for, but there is not much time for staff to just sit and listen and hear their stories. Yet when the stories are published the staff are eager to read the biographies. You can imagine the impact that this can have. Instead of seeing a resident who may be frail, have some memory loss and needs care, they can learn about them as they were in their former vibrant and active lives.

I have been enriched by hearing their stories too. These people in their nineties have lived through hardships of The Depression and a world war yet each has shown me the value of a life well lived - instances of care, loyalty, love, compassion, fighting for an ideal, righting an injustice: that makes the work so worthwhile.

The involvement of the family in collecting photographs opens up further space for conversations between client and family. Often in our busy lives we do not make time to ask questions of our forebears. The biography process gives the whole family a chance to open up valuable conversations.

Fleur Rubens
Volunteer Biographer



Our Aged Care Partners



It's been a win-win situation for our residents, relatives and staff members. The benefits to residents have been immeasurable. They have been able to provide their family with a beautifully bound "life story", told in their own words. For one family, this is especially poignant, as their mother died within a short period after completing her story...

As staff members, we have been very privileged to be able to read these stories (on invitation) and learn details about our residents that may never have come to life without this program. Instead of the information provided from family members on admission, we now know details that the residents themselves deem to be significant in their lives!

There has been a lot of discussion amongst the residents and many more would love to be able to tell their own 'Life Story'.

Erin Kennedy
Service Manager
Mercy Place Montrose

Our residents who have participated in the program have had a positive experience and often talk to the staff and other residents about how they have a book about their life story.... (Making the others quite envious).

One resident during her presentation said she felt so important and loved people listening to her tell her story. I hope that we can continue because we have many stories to tell.

Kate Page
Clinical Care Coordinator
Mercy Place Montrose



Volunteer Support }



“It was good to see everyone and hear of their biography experience. It was extremely helpful and gave me some good ideas.”

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT IS IMPERATIVE

Volunteer In-Services

For biographers who work as sole workers, regular volunteer in-services are an opportunity to come together and share experiences as a team, learn from each other and maintain the friendships that they have made.

Ongoing supervision

Support is just a phone call away and volunteers are in constant contact with their Coordinator of Volunteers.

Editing Buddy system

To assist and expedite the final editing process, biographers are assigned a fellow volunteer who reviews the draft and provides suggested changes which may include spelling, grammar, format and placement of photos.

Liaison with the aged care team

We work closely with aged care nurses who provide referrals to Beyond Words. Volunteer biographers are linked to their client and the biography process begins.

Organisational Development

In 2013 we consolidated our operations and invested in the development of the organisation, setting ourselves up for growth.

- New processes and infrastructure set up according eg. administration, phones, emails, website and office space (co-working office Hub Melbourne membership)
- Salaries and payroll systems in place for CEO/Coordinator of Volunteers and Project Officer
- Recruitment and induction of part-time Project Officer
- Operational volunteer staff recruited, inducted and working across key support areas of finance and communications.
- Redevelopment of our brand including a new name, logo, website and production of the short film *Long Story Short*
- Grants prepared and submitted, and business development: completion of The School for Social Entrepreneurs Accelerator program & mentorship for CEO, and fee-for-service business plan
- Targeted coverage in local media
- The experience of biography for participants evaluated, and tracking of volunteer hours and operating costs

As our brand continues to grow, and the positive impact we deliver becomes known, the level of interest in our program continues to grow. Since June 2012 we have received a significant level of interest from the broader community than we cannot yet meet with our current capacity: from individuals seeking to become a volunteer biographer, a number of aged care providers interested in partnering with us, and many personal requests from individuals and families.

Our Strategic Plan 2013-15

In 2013 we developed our three year Strategic Plan to address the main opportunities and challenges we see in the near future around our capacity in meeting demand, social impact, and growth and sustainability. By June 2015 our plan is to:

- Establish a head office and facilitation hub to support the effective management and administration of regional biography service branches
- Attain 15% of our revenue from sources other than grant funding
- Recruit and train two additional Coordinator of Volunteers to support our community of volunteer biographers
- Train 40 volunteer biographers*
- Complete 100 to 150 Life Story Cases*

*Once a volunteer is trained as a biographer they become an ongoing resource, contributing to the community into the future

**A single 'life story case' has deep ripple effects across individual, family, nursing home and community domains that can grow exponentially over time

Key Performance Indicators & Social Impact

In 2013 we delivered the following quantifiable outcomes in line with our Strategic Plan.

Quantifiable Indicators

Volunteer biographers trained	10
Training time for each biographer	37.5 hours
Referrals to our service	35
Average age on referral	89 years
Volunteer in-services conducted	4
Completed Life Story Cases	18
Average duration of biographies	15 weeks
Average transcribing/editing/formatting time	68 hours
Average face-to-face time of biography	10 hours
Average travel time of biographies	8 hours
TOTAL Volunteer Biographer Time	1,200 hours (32 full-time weeks)

Based on what has been learnt in the palliative care setting, average times per biography is normal and an indicator of the care and attention that volunteers put into each biography.

Our Social Impact

Each biography client is currently invited to complete an anonymous survey once their biography is complete. While the deep and long-term effects of our work are difficult to capture, surveys responses have been overwhelmingly positive with some quotes below.

The most valuable thing was... *“Having the chance to express myself and having the opportunity to revisit old times.”*

“We would like to thank you for a wonderful opportunity to spend time with the volunteer and to provide a wonderful legacy for the family. Something to be treasured and read many times.”

“It was amazing how my memory returned bit by bit. Myself and my 4 children, who are aged in their 60's back down to 50's, were amazed that I did it!”

The most valuable thing in the process was ...

*it will REMAIN AFTER I AM
gone.*

beyond words}

Finances



An independent review of the organisation was conducted (full report by O'Brien Accountants & Advisors available on request).

The finances for this Annual Report covers the 2012/13 financial year where grant funding was received from *The Trust Company – Ian Rollo Currie Estate*, *The Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation*, *The Funding Network* and *The State Trustees*. Salaries were set up for key operational staff and other expenses included: insurances, co-working office space, legal and accounting, equipment and printing.

Statement of Comprehensive Income for year ended 30 June 2013

	2013 \$
Revenue	120,781
Administration expenses	(906)
Employee benefit expense	(48,635)
Other expenses	(7,752)
Current year surplus before income tax	63,488
Income tax expense	-
Net current year surplus	63,488
Other comprehensive income after income tax	
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	-
Total comprehensive income attributable to members of the entity	63,488

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2013

	2013 \$
Current Assets	
CURRENT ASSETS	
Cash and cash equivalents	65,040
Other assets	2,718
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	67,758
TOTAL ASSETS	67,758
LIABILITIES	
CURRENT LIABILITIES	
Trade and other payables	3,411
Provisions	491
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	3,902
TOTAL LIABILITIES	3,902
NET ASSETS	63,856
EQUITY	
Retained profits	63,856
TOTAL EQUITY	63,856

In completing our pilot project we have a better understanding of actual expenses to maintain the integrity and quality of the service and to work sustainably. In line with our strategic goals, in the next financial year we can expect to see our revenue streams diversified and additional staff employed to enable growth of our volunteer biographer capacity.

The Next Chapter



In 2013 we consolidated operations in completing a pilot project demonstrating clear outcomes. We also started invested in the organisation to put ourselves in a position of growth in 2014 to:

- Have at least two volunteer intake training programs to train more biographers and further refine our recruitment and training strategies
- Run five volunteer in-services in the year
- Develop an alternate process for printing, binding and publishing
- Explore and implement fee-for-service and other revenue strategies in our business model
- Further develop our ability to capture our social impact to more comprehensively capture those social impacts that are measurable for all beneficiaries
- Expand our board membership
- Explore book launch event parties for clients, a library of biographies and life story reading sessions in the nursing home

Acknowledgements

The residents we work with & their families

Harry, Bill, Gwenyth, Maisie, Audrey D, Audrey G, Audrey H, Stuart, Rosemary, Leonie, Lex, Eileen, Muriel, Estelle, Margaret, Percy, Mary, Merle, Silvia, Joan

Our team of Volunteer Biographers

Liz, Fleur, Carol, Carole, Laraine, Lynne, Judith, Meesha, Daniela, Deborah

Volunteer Staff

Sven Joschke (HLB Mann Judd) – bookkeeping
Lachlan Conboy – logo, website upgrade
Emma Hutton – rebranding & publishing
Malcolm Gunn – website upgrade
Karina Jagoe – communications strategy & business development
Tine Pia Jensen & Chianh Zeijing (RMIT) – short film production

Aged Care Partners

Mercy Health - Mercy Place Montrose
Park Lane Residential Aged Care Croydon

Partner Sponsors

The Lord Mayor Charitable Foundation
The Trust Company – The Ian Rollo Currie Foundation
The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
The Funding Network
The English Foundation
The State Trustees – Donald Mann Bequest
Eastern Regional Libraries

Supporting Organisations

BeyondBlue
COTA-Vic
Volunteering Victoria
The School for Social Entrepreneurs
Hub Melbourne
EthicalJobs.com
Probono Australia
K & L Gates

Supporting Mentors

Rowan Dowland, Neill McDowell, Mark Fraser, students from The School for Social Entrepreneurs

Contact Us & Ways To Give



Ways to Give

Whilst Beyond Words is volunteer-based, there are still many costs in delivering the service and our work is not possible without the generosity of our donors.

Your support enables other individuals, families and communities to capture and celebrate their unique life stories.

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

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Visiting: www.beyondwords.org.au
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