www.ourhouse.org.au

our house news

VOLUME 3 SUMMER 2015

A project by Northern Rivers Community Cancer Foundation & Our Kids

Our House is flourishing



It's been 24 months since we opened our doors and over 1,500 guests have stayed during their time of need.

Running at over 85% occupancy Our House has certainly filled the need of those travelling to Lismore, with many week nights reaching 100%. Our guests come from a broad geographic area and for a wide range of medical reasons including treatment for cancer, carers of cancer patients, parents of Children in hospitals, to family members who have loved ones in ICU and the other wards of Lismore Base Hospital as well as St Vincent's Hospital.

The community is still heavily involved with Our House with the continuation of the Lords Taverners Thursday evening community BBQ's. These have been so popular both with the community and the guests that we will be expanding the BBQ's to Tuesday evening as well. For the BBQ's, guests are invited to dinner held in the communal lounge and adjoining outdoor area. The dinner is prepared by teams of people from across our region. These teams consist of local businesses, friends, schools and service clubs, all giving their time to provide an appreciated meal. These nights are regarded by the guests as being a highlight of their stay.

It is not only with dinners that the community continues to be a part of Our House. Several local businesses continue to provide their services to assist in keeping running cost down and allow Our House to continue to provide a safe and well kept accommodation facility. This includes such businesses as Statesman Security who keep a watchful eye on the facility and Laser Plumbing who attend to our day to day plumbing needs.

Grafton, Yamba and Maclean Clubs unite to cool Our House



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Recently the Grafton District Services Club, Yamba Bowling Club and Maclean Club joined forces to help cool down Laurel Cottage. This is the part of the Our House site where reception is located, as well as the offices of NSW Cancer Council and the Leukaemia Foundation. Laurel Cottage also has a beautiful meeting room and is frequently used by associated community groups for meetings, seminars as well as Our House Board meetings.

Early this year Ruth, the manager of Our House was approached by the Davidsons, guests from Yamba encouraging Our House to submit a grant to NSW Clubs.

The Our House submission was successful and over $7,000 was donated by the three clubs to replace the air conditioner in Laurel House so that guests and the community can use the Our House facilities in comfort.

Our Kids calendar makes a splash on the Streets

Now in its thirteenth year the much loved Our Kids Calendar, which features children who have spent time in Children's Ward or Special Care Nursery, has now been launched.

Once again it has been beautifully photographed by highly regarded press photographer, Jacklyn Wagner who this year ventured with the much loved calendar kids to the Back Alley Gallery of Lismore to capture their shot in front of the graffiti artworks. The Back Alley Gallery is part of Lismore CBD and is a project to take back the streets piece by piece commencing at Eggins Lane.

With such a colourful backdrop it made sense to produce a full colour calendar for the first time; thereby celebrating both the graffiti works and the lives of the featured children.



Our Kids Miss April Drew Brownhill-Feain

Snapshot of the our kids calendar to come - provided by Soren on Monday

And a big thank you goes to the twelve local businesses that each sponsor one month of the calendar to cover all the production costs. This results in all monies raised going directly towards the purchase of equipment for the hospital Children's Ward and Special Care Nursery allowing children receiving medical care to be treated locally.

The calendar is now on sale at a retail price of $20.00.

They will be available throughout the North Coast and online at www.ourkids.org.au.

An overview of Our Kids activities in recent years is also available at this web site.

Keeping Dry in July



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Dry July is a national campaign that assists charities and hospitals throughout Australia who care for Cancer patients. Their aim is to fund projects that directly benefited the wellbeing of adults living with cancer.

This year was the fourth time that Our House has been successful in becoming a participant in the national campaign and a team was formed to partake in the challenge to go alcohol free for the month of July.

The end result being that over 250 donations raised $25,000 for Our House to fund the installation of a permanent weather proof cover for the outdoor dining BBQ area.

This area is used frequently by guests and the community, especially on Tuesday and Thursday evening when they gather and enjoy a home cooked meal.

"We were finding that it was difficult to organise outdoor get togethers with guests because as soon as there was any rain we had to move indoors". said Rebekka Battista, Our House Director. "It was a perfect project for the Dry July Campaign and plans are to have the construction of the weather proof cover completed by Christmas.

Welcome Sandra



Sandra Rowan has recently joined the Our House team as a Guest Services Officer. Sandra spent over 20 years as a local Community Programs Co-ordinator for the NSW Cancer Council and brings a wealth of knowledge and amazing caring nature to help the Our House team look after guests.



This year the annual Local Government Charity Golf Day which is held in September had a full field of 134 players including golfers and sponsors from Sydney to Brisbane taking part. A record $9,000 was raised for Our House, the charity for the day. Our House Fundraising Officer Rebekka Battista (front) with Lismore City Council staff and Local Government Charity Golf Day Organising Committee members (l-r) Barry Goodwin, Vicki Walker and Anthony Magarry. The 2014 event raised $9000 for Our House.



Recently Our House hosted a Cancer Accommodation Conference for all providers in regional NSW. These facilities are operated by community service organisations such as Rotary, the Cancer Council of NSW and Our House and key personnel met to discuss best practices and ways to meet the needs of an increasing number of guests.



Gai Phillips, Sandra Rowan and Ruth Harrison enjoying a quiet moment in the office at Our House



At the recent Far North Coast Law Society Golf Day a great day was had with $1000 was donated to help Our House continue their work



With over 400 ticket sold this year Opera at the Channon was a great success raising $10,000 for Our House, Westpac Helicopter and other local charities.

Grafton patient brings great humour to Our House

Bernie needed to travel to Lismore for treatment and living two hours away from Lismore's Cancer unit the 260km round daily travel was out of the question. Our House was the ideal option as it is located directly across from the Lismore Cancer Unit thereby reducing his travel and accommodation costs.

"The PSA test saved my life and having Our House so close to the hospital helps make my treatment smoother" Bernie said.

"My treatment has been a journey, I learnt all about my 'water works' and one of the side effects from my radiation has been the growing back of hair on my bald head, which I am sure will give my barber from South Grafton a real shock!' Bernie said.

"The weekly BBQ dinners with other guests are just great, and it's a chance I get to brighten all with my jokes and with my water and wind stories which I regularly try out on the Cancer unit staff as well" said Bernie.

"Thank you to Ruth and the team at Our House who have encouraged me during my treatment and I recommend anyone to stay at Our House during treatment in Lismore" Bernie added.

Bernie is looking forward to introducing foods back into his diet and keeping his new head of hair well groomed!



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The Leukaemia Foundation joins Our House



Ruth Harrison with Cathy Paine

To assist guests more, the Northern Rivers office for the Leukaemia Foundation has set up an office in Laurel Cottage where the Our House reception is located. The main aim of the Foundation is to supports patients and their carers who have a diagnosis of a blood cancer. That includes, myeloma, lymphoma, MDS, MPNs and of course the leukaemia's.

Leading this national charity in this area is Cathy Paine. Cathy is the Leukaemia Foundation representative and the Blood Cancer Support Coordinator for the Northern Rivers area and has 20 years' experience as a haematology/oncology RN working in chemotherapy and radiotherapy units across the country.

Cathy said: "the guests might be interested to know that"

- **Every 46 minutes** someone in Australia is diagnosed with a blood cancer or related blood disorder.
- There is an estimated **11,500** new diagnoses **every year.**
- Blood Cancers are the **second biggest cause of cancer death** in Australia and that the causes of these cancers and related blood disorders remains relatively unknown.

The Leukaemia Foundation assists guests by providing practical support in the form of emotional support, accommodation assistance, financial assistance, educational materials, disease specific newsletters and educational events, support groups and free patient transport locally.

Please contact Cathy anytime on 0266216501 or 0423294133 cpaine@leukaemia.org.au

Yes I want to help Our House

I enclose cheque/money order for $
made payable to: **Our House**, or please charge my credit card.

☐ Bankcard ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

Card No. ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Expiry date / Signature

Name

Address

Postcode Email

Phone

Organisation

Send to: Our House
145 Laurel Avenue, Lismore, NSW 2480

Donations of $2 and over are tax deductible.
We will post a receipt to you.

our house

Our House is a development by Northern Rivers Community Cancer Foundation and Our Kids. Funded by the Australian Government through the Health and Hospitals Fund, NSW State Government, NSW Cancer Council and the Northern Rivers Community.

Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

OUR KIDS