



**CONNECTING
COMMUNITIES**
AUSTRALIA

Annual Report 2019

OUR MISSION:

CCA's Mission is to support rural and remote communities with challenges due to a changing climate and mental health issues.

OUR VISION

Connecting Communities Australia believes there is a better way to support rural and remote communities.

We do this by providing professional field service teams, including volunteers to repair, build and maintain essentials to the community, supporting mental health.

This delivers sustainable respite from the challenges of a changing climate.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

On behalf of the board and the Connecting Communities Australia (CCA) team, I'm pleased to present our Annual Report and share with you some highlights of our first year of operation that has been the 2018/19 financial year.

What an exciting and challenging start it's been for CCA in terms of growth and development: deepening relationships, expanding services and as well as many new and dynamic opportunities. Twelve months on, many of the communities we support are battling a changing climate and issues of business sustainability and mental wellbeing.

When I first started running programs in rural and remote Australia the focus was on a drought that had started in Western Queensland in 2013 that many hoped and believed would end soon and good seasons would return. The program was about supporting community and farming infrastructure, providing financial support and lifting the community spirits.

As 2019 draws to a close, drought has changed into a new reality of a changed climate and the program focus has evolved into supporting community resilience, adaption and mental wellbeing.

Connecting Communities Australia's programs can be divided into three types:



Supporting rural communities by encouraging resilience, identifying new income streams, improving infrastructure and mental wellbeing. These programs were implemented in Charleville and Nymagee.



CCA's remote school's program 'Schools Walking Together', where we undertake to support remote schools by renovating buildings, gardens and facilities to improve the wellbeing and education of the children. Our first program was run at Goodooga Central School in north west NSW.



CCA's Corporate Partnership Program, where we work with a partner to deliver support to rural and remote communities. In 2018-2019 we partnered with RACQ to deliver a 'Drought and Flood Relief Program' in Queensland. This included support for dairy farmers in the South Burnett Shire and community groups recovering from the Townsville floods.

'We'd like to thank the amazing people who partner with us and volunteer to make our programs a success and help change lives.'



I would like to acknowledge the support of the following organisations:

- Hubbed for providing office space and support and making all the CCA employee's and volunteers feel like they were part of their team. Hubbed has also supported the CCA's Sales and Marketing team
- Burson's Automotives for providing financial support to enable CCA to commence operations
- The RACQ Foundation for partnering with Connecting Communities Australia in Queensland and enabling us to support rural and remote communities.
- HWL Ebsworth Lawyers for their pro bono support particularly in obtaining DGR status for CCA
- David Muir and Peter Johnstone of the Clem Jones Foundation for their advice and support
- Department of Primary Rural Resilience Team in Dubbo and in particular James Cleaver
- Rural Financial Counselling, RAMHP and Agforce for providing advice and direction
- NALAG, The Red Cross and Rotary for providing funding for our community programs
- The WayAhead Mental Health Association for providing support in developing the mental wellbeing component of our program
- Karen's Simmons at The Change Executive for her support and direction
- Tracy James from Tracy James Creative for her help and support with CCA's website
- Selley's Paints for providing material and resources for our programs
- Qantas for providing funding for our 'Schools Walking Together Program'.



I would like to acknowledge Connecting Communities Australia's amazing team.

Our Directors, David McLean and Chris Nassenstein. They have both provided important advice and direction over the year. David has provided Connecting Communities Australia an office in Sydney which has enabled us to focus our resources on program delivery

Our Advisor's Patrick Baker and Meghan Weekes for providing strategic direction for the organisation.

Rob Gibb who has worked as Connecting Communities Australia's Operations Manager in 2018-2019. Rob helped identify the locations, scope them, communicated with community members and farmers and then develop the program. Rob was present on all our programs in 2018-2019. His contribution has been immense.

Tony Leahy and Brett East who coordinated the year's programs.

In the office the support of Michael Hohl, Afshan Adeel, Michael Bennett and Madison James has been invaluable.

We support rural and remote communities with challenges due to the changing climate and support mental wellbeing.

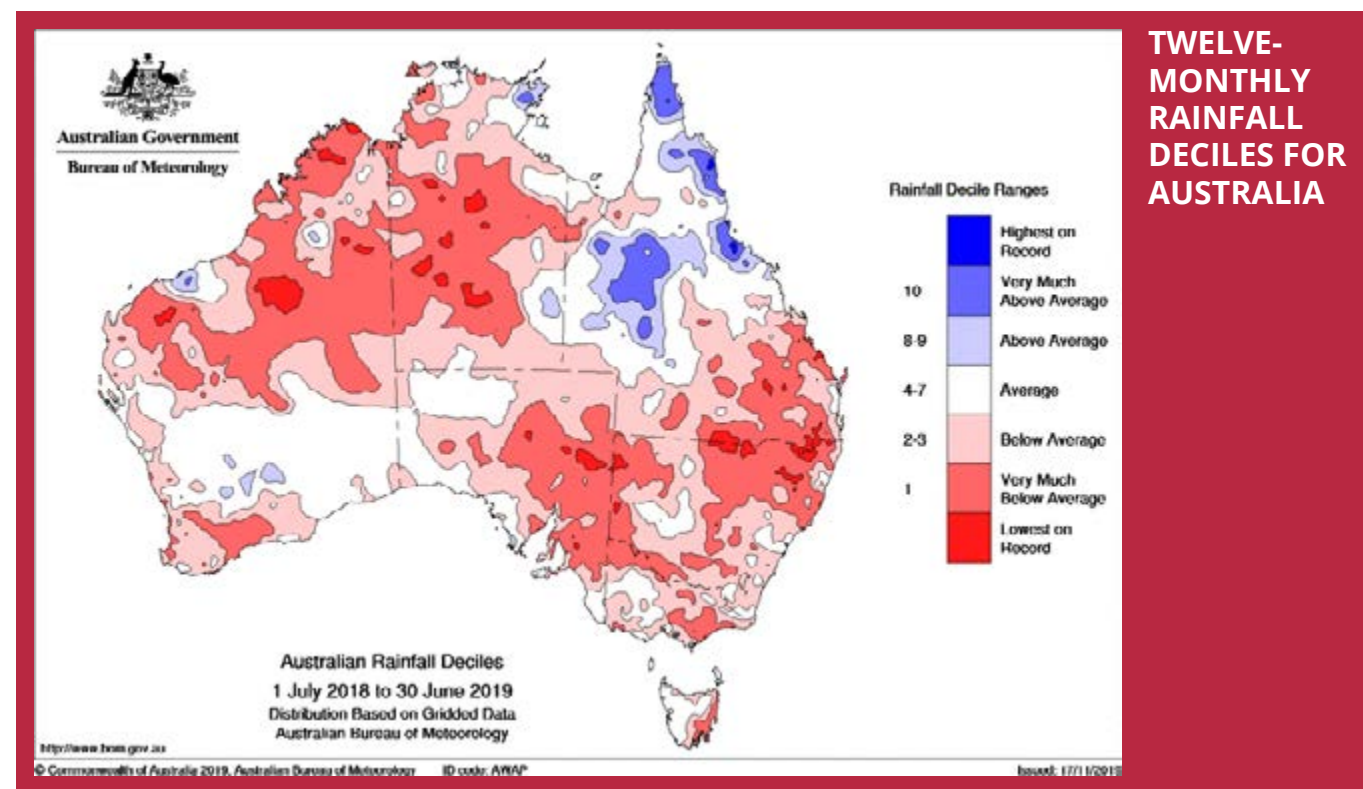
Across 2019, Connecting Communities Australia has reached out to the communities to the north, west and east of Queensland. In NSW we have worked to the west and north west. Our 120 volunteers have supported beef cattle farmers in northern Queensland, community groups in Townsville, dairy farmers in Kingaroy and the sheep and cattle community of Charleville.

They have engaged with the Aboriginal community of Goodooga and the farming community of Nymagee and Mt Hope.

With the realisation that the change in climate is now likely to stay, our practical help, community events and workshops are about supporting these communities to adapt to these changes and help them be resilient.

Our aim is to show that people care about their communities and will support them through ever changing times.

'With the realisation that the change in climate is now likely to stay, our practical help, community events and workshops are about supporting these communities to adapt to these changes and help them be resilient.'



www.bom.gov.au



We provide professional field service teams, including volunteers to repair, build and maintain essentials to the community, supporting mental health.

Connecting Communities Australia works with local stakeholders to identify rural and remote communities needing support in addressing the needs of a changing climate and mental wellbeing. Those projects of greatest need are identified by the local community members.

CCA's operational team undertake a site visit to assess the projects, the resources needed and the volunteer skills required.

A volunteer team is assembled who will travel to the area to deliver the program.

The program involves sustainable and tangible support for the community. They include:

- Community events and workshops
- Construction, renovation and repairs to local buildings
- Erection and repairs to fencing
- Vehicle and mechanical repairs and maintenance
- Construction and landscaping of community projects
- Construction and repairs to community buildings
- Renovation and repairs of school buildings and facilities

Examples of these programs were run in Charleville and Nymagee. Events including mental wellbeing staff were held in both communities. These involved local community members, volunteers and professional support staff. The events provided an opportunity for community members and farmers to socially interact and where appropriate seek mental health support.

Volunteer teams were based within the community and on farms painting, fencing, landscape gardening and repairing machinery. While the practical support was significant the social and emotional support was even more important. As one of the farmers we helped said 'I couldn't care less if they sat on their backsides and did nothing as long as they talked to me'.

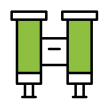


'I couldn't care less if they sat on their backsides and did nothing as long as they talked to me'.



THE CONNECTING COMMUNITIES MODEL

4 KEY PILLARS TO PROGRAM DELIVERY



IDENTIFY

Locations
Projects



SOURCE

Resources
Volunteers



DELIVER

Programs



MEASURE

Impact



SERVICES

Tangible sustainable improvements to communities including:

- Community workshops
- Community events
- Building repair and renovation
- Construction of working facilities
- Erection and repairs of fencing
- Vehicle repair and maintenance
- Mechanical equipment repairs and maintenance
- Construction and landscaping of community properties
- Construction and repair of community buildings
- Renovation of school buildings and facilities



PARTNERS

Examples of entities leveraging our services to support communities:

Foundations

- RACQ
- NRMA

Corporations

- Qantas
- Bursons
- Selleys

Associations

- Canterbury Bulldogs
- Red Cross
- Rotary Australia
- NALAG
- Bikesforlife

Direct Programming

- Nymagee
- Charleville
- Goodooga

Local Government

- Murweh Shire Council
- Bogan Shire Council
- Longreach Regional Council
- Townsville Council
- South Burnett Shire Council

Federal Government

- Department of Primary Industry
- Rural Resilience Team
- Rural Financial Counsellors
- RAMHP



CCA CURRENT PERFORMANCE



'CCA worked with the RACQ Foundation team identifying projects, assessing the specific needs, drawing up a program and then running the program.'

We are dedicated to genuine partnerships focused on building long term and sustainable connections which shape and exercise control over our futures.

CCA seeks out long term partnerships in corporate and government circles to deliver relief to communities suffering climatic extremes and the impact these events have on their populations.

In 2019 Connecting Communities Australia partnered with the RACQ Foundation to deliver a Drought & Flood Program across rural and regional Queensland. Four locations were identified across Queensland that had been particularly hard hit. They included:

- The Dairy Farming community in the South Burnett Shire near Kingaroy
- Flood impacted community groups in Townsville and the farming community of Giru to the south
- The community of Julia Creek and the cattle farmers in the district
- The community of Cloncurry and the cattle farmers in the district

CCA worked with the RACQ Foundation team identifying projects, assessing the specific needs, drawing up a program and then running the program.

The 12 month program involved 70 RACQ staff working on 40 projects involving 3,900 hours of work. This including vehicle and mechanical repairs, building, painting and landscape gardening. The program brought communities together who were still recovering from flood, drought and cyclones.

Like all of these projects the community events always had the greatest impact, reducing social isolation and bringing hope back to communities.



Kingaroy, Drought & Flood Program volunteers



'They bridge the gap between city and country and provide an opportunity for reconciliation between cultures and communities.'

Connecting Communities Australia believe that Australia is stronger, fairer and more equal when communities are connected.

Our Schools Walking Together Program connects children from remote communities to children from our urban centres

An example of this was the program CCA ran in June 2019 at The Goodooga Central School.

25 volunteers spent 4 days painting, landscape gardening and building a bicycle track on the grounds of the school. The program included a community event at the school.

These programs provide social and cultural connections, engagement through sport and cultural activities, they bridge the gap between city and country and provide an opportunity for reconciliation between cultures and communities.

This program will be extended in 2020 to include a visit to Sydney for these children from remote communities.



HUBBED



SELLEYS®

RACQ

QANTAS

tracy james
CREATIVEWayAhead
Mental Health Association NSWNALAG
National Association for
Loss & Grief (NSW) Inc

OUR PARTNERSHIPS

Our aim of bringing support and relief to farmers, schools and communities in outback Australia has attracted involvement from a range of partners who provide not only financial backing for our programs, but also invaluable expertise, experience and insights. Our work relies on the support of such passionate, like-minded organisations, and we're proud and thankful to be able to work with them on the shared goal of achieving positive outcomes for outback Australia.

CORPORATE

Our main partner for the Queensland programs has been the RACQ Foundation, which has provided two co-branded 4WD vans that ensure Connecting Communities staff can travel beyond sealed roads. Funding for on road costs and financial support for the latest program in Cloncurry. In addition, a large number of skilled RACQ volunteers have been getting involved in our field trips.

Burson's Automotives provided funding for our program in Charleville. Qantas has provided funding for our 'Schools Walking Together Program' in 2020.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health issues in drought-affected remote communities are of growing concern. That's why we are particularly thankful that we can rely on the support of a range of mental health organisations. NALAG providing funding and support staff for our program in Nymagee.

INTERNATIONAL
GRAMMAR SCHOOLST ANDREW'S
CATHEDRAL
SCHOOL
FOUNDED 1885

COMMUNITY

The Australian Red Cross and local Rotary International Clubs have been supporting the community event parts of our programs.

Two Sydney-based bicycle organisations, Bicycle Garden and Bikes4Life, very generously donated bicycles and extensive volunteer time for our Goodooga school project.

GOVERNMENT

The Department of Primary Industry in the form of the Rural Resilience Team have provided support and direction for our program. Identifying communities suffering from drought and mental health issues. The Rural Financial Counsellors in NSW and Queensland have identified specific community programs and provided counselling support for the program.

SCHOOLS

The International Grammar School and St Andrews Cathedral School have partnered with CCA on 'Schools Walking Together Program'. We support remote schools in Goodooga, Weilmoringle and Enngonia.



Glenn Price



David McLean



Robert Gibb



Chris Nassenstein



Brett East



Afshan Adeel



Michael Hohl



Meghan Weekes

OUR PEOPLE

Connecting Community Australia's Founder and CEO, Glenn Price, can look back at over 20 years of successfully organising and managing volunteer trips to help disadvantaged people in Australia, Asia and Africa.

Among other roles, Glenn chaired an International NGO for over a decade (earning him a nomination for Australian of the Year for services to underprivileged children), and was the National Partnerships and Volunteers Manager for Frontier Services and its Outback Links volunteer program.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Glenn Price

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Robert Gibb

PROJECT COORDINATORS

Brett East

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Michael Hohl

ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT

Afshan Adeel

SOCIAL MEDIA ASSISTANT

Madison James

GRANTS ASSISTANT

Michael Bennett

OUR BOARD MEMBERS

Director

Glenn Price

Director

David McLean

Director

Chris Nassenstein

OUR ADVISORS

Meghan Weekes

Senior Program Manager at the
RE Ross Trust

OUR VOLUNTEERS

We wouldn't be able to do what we do without the enthusiasm and dedication of dozens of volunteers willing to donate their time, knowledge and skills, not only to our field trips but also to providing valuable administrative and office support.



CHARLEVILLE 2018

Adriana Aliste, Debbie Aliste, Brian Chamberlain, Kris Funnell, Kareena Gibb, Milvia Harder, Tony Larsen, Michelle Leahy, Joe Meagher, Angie Nassenstein, Chris Nassenstein, Rory Price, Louisa Price, Ava Robinson, Grace Robinson, Nick Roche, Luke Webb, Stewart Rigby, Louise Daley, Joe Meagher, Madelaine Page.



NYMAGEE 2019

Iain Leeson, Margie Leeson, Brian Chamberlain, Cem Yucel, Erhan Eucel, Kareena Gibb, Karen Simmons, Joe Meagher, Stewart Rigby, Nick Roche, Greg Crowley, Paul Callaghan, Miki Holmes, Mick Colmer, Brendon Diver, Joe Muller, Marcello Costantini, Deidre Constantini, Karen Simmons, Trevor Hattersley.



KINGAROY 2019

Simon McClelland, Tony Larsen, Peter Duce, Albert Budworth, John Travers, Daniel Alexander, Matt Lingren, Amy Forthsy, Selena Masterton, Sarah Browne, Brenda Coulton, Katy Graham.

**GOODDOGA 2019**

Philip Sleurs, Mischa Vickas, Venetia Scott, Maria Miklenda, Lavinia Williams, Lance Williams, Joshua D'Abrera, Ryan Mcrae, Kitty-Jean Laginha, Louise Daley, Ava Robinson, Grace Robinson, Jane Price, Louisa Price, Rory Price, Darcy O'Rourke, Lucy Howard Shibuya, Michael Hohl, Kirk Sparrow.

**TOWNSVILLE 2019**

Evita Ymer, Rebecca King, Adam Short, Leanne Dicken, Tracey Collins, Anton Vitte, Amanda Burton, Roxanne Sergeant, Chris Rowe, Penny Nuth, Matthew Gosen, Zeitie Weir, Elizabeth Mogg, Karen Nasko, Jo Terry, Janelle Barker, Daniel Broderick, Peter Duce, Albert Budworth, Ross McLaren, Tony Larsen

**JULIA CREEK 2019**

Claire Farquhar, Rebecca Cassells, Anni Harris, Alana Morse, Bre Brooks, Rachael McDevitt, Simon McClland, Glenn Robertson, John Stark, Michael Tyler, Hannah Kennedy-Goodwin, Mario Parada, Jessica Wilson, Peter Duce, Ian Proven.

**CLONCURRY 2019**

Alan Kidner, Carly Vickers, Dan Williams, Jessica Lawson, Mark Schnitzerling, Michelle Durelli, Ra Searancke, Romy Farrer, Skye Shelsher, Steve McPhee, Tegan Lawrence, Sandra Stevenson, Anthony Larsen, Grant Dawson, Toby Sansome, Stephen Fordham, Stuart Kidd, Brent Henderson, Albert Budworth, Samuel Graham

We value the feedback of our communities and volunteers. Here is some of what they have to say.

CHARLEVILLE COMMUNITY

'As Mayor of the Murweh shire I am absolutely honoured to have these organised volunteers returning to our region to help those in need and boost morale. We were fortunate enough to have this Volunteer project in our shire in 2016. During this time these volunteers helped so many farmers, the Historical House and many other community organisation during this hardship period.

Our drought stricken farmers are still talking about the positive impact made by these volunteers during their time in our Shire 2 years ago. With the continuation of the drought and tough times this kind of help is beneficial for their mental health and wellbeing. Forming life lasting relationships with the volunteers which our farmers never forget.'

Annie Liston,
Mayor of Murweh Shire

'We had a very fruitful as well as a very fulfilled time with our volunteers, think they all actually became part of our family...each was unique and wonderful in their own way with so much to contribute both workwise and mental health wise. Our conversations around the meal tables were very much just plain fun but also very good for both Brad and I in the fact that the conversation was easy . We got so much insight into their worlds as they got out of ours. Their manner and easy natures are beyond reproach, their friendship support and caring will never be forgotten and treasured forever'.

Jenny from Charleville



'The great camaraderie and spirit that invaded (in the nicest sense) my world, the great and hopefully lasting friendships that were forged and the comfort of knowing that there are still very caring people out there will be the legacy of the visit of Connecting Communities to Maxvale in 2018'.

Alicia from Charleville

'The highlight was the wonderful , delightful company. Hearing of their stories experiencing the warmth and willingness emanating from them all. It was very quiet here when everyone left!!'

Jan from Charleville

'Old fences removed makes yarding sheep up way safer and easier. Now up to 30 paddies and it is excellent to have somewhere safe and secure for them besides the house yard! House and garden is comfier and more convenient because of those jobs.

It will make a big difference to our little community as the arts groups now have a place in which they can do their work shops and it will take a lot of pressure off us having to set up and clean up.'

Nickie from Charleville

GOODOOGA

'We are so grateful to the Connected Communities Australia group for giving up their time and skills to come to our small, very remote community to provide their skills.

This weekend they will be coming to build a bike track for our children; build shade over our community gardens and paint parts of our school.

I believe that they will be connecting with us in the future to do more for our Indigenous Community.'

**Annie, Principal,
Goodooga Central School**

'The highlight was seeing the local childrens' eager discussions about how they could use the bike track, and the girls and boys painting the containers. It was a privilege to hear personal stories from Mindy and Lavinia about how life was in the area in previous years'.

**Phillip, Volunteer,
Goodooga Central School**

'There were many! I really valued the opportunity to be welcomed into the community of Goodooga which is a part of the country I otherwise have no connection to, it was great to break out of the city bubble and get the tiniest glimpse of what life is like elsewhere. I think this kind of opportunity is both rare and precious. Meeting and working with the other volunteers was great, I still feel a connection to all the volunteers there and I think of everyone fondly. The most treasured highlight was engaging with the kids and being able to share in the pleasure of bikes and riding with them'.

**Venetia, Volunteer,
Goodooga Central School**

'It was great getting a better understanding of an Aboriginal community and the kinds of needs that exist.'

**Lucy, Volunteer,
Goodooga Central School**

HERMIDALE

'Often it is not what people say but what people do that matters. Thanks to Glenn and the volunteers associated with Connecting Communities, a school identified project has been accomplished. The long-term effect of this is that the vegetable garden is a daily reminder to us that people care, are aware of our situation and have had a connection to our school community. The drought will go eventually and this structure will be lasting legacy of the time the people came to help. We visit our garden everyday and watch as life continues to grow and change through the gift of nature and a touch of water and sunshine. Thank you.'

**Skye, Principal,
Hermidale Public School**

NYMAGEE

'You have invigorated me. Brought back an interest in life and made me think outside my own little box. I can't believe there are people like this in the world'

**Donna, Farmer
Nyamagee**

'Yes the work accomplished will make a great deal of difference, the cottage was in danger of becoming very dilapidate now it looks well cared for and I hope to install screens on the windows when I have painted the sills and surrounds which will make the dwelling a lot more attractive to visitors here. I have kept in my mind the suggestion of Farm Stays.'

**Marlene, Farmer
Nymagee**

CHARLEVILLE

'I was shocked to see how dry it was and the impact the drought is having on these communities.'

**Nick, Volunteer,
Charleville**

WHAT'S PLANNED FOR 2019-20

In 2019 Connecting Communities Australia ran six programs in rural and remote Australia. Four programs were in Queensland and two in NSW. The four programs in Queensland were in partnership with RACQ and the two programs in NSW represented a collaboration with a number of not-for-profit organisations and charities.

In 2020 the plan is to run twelve programs focusing on Western Queensland and Western NSW. CCA is in the process of identifying mental health partners to partner with in both states.

Connecting Communities Australia and the WayAhead Mental Health Association are in the process of establishing a partnership supporting rural and remote communities in NSW. A submission will be made to the NSW Government for consideration for the May 2020 State budget. The program would represent a combination of CCA practical drought resilience elements and community events with WayAhead's mental wellbeing program.

The great news is CCA's Walking with Schools Program has received funding from Qantas. This will help support the communities of Goodooga, Enngonia and Weilmoringle. The program will be held both in Goodooga and Sydney. A team of volunteers will travel to Goodooga Central School to continue the good work started last year. Later in the year students from Goodooga will travel to Sydney to engage in activities with Aboriginal students from International Grammar School and St Andrews Cathedral School.

A second Walking with Schools Program is planned in Euabalong West Public School. CCA will work with the school to apply for funding with the FRRR.

A community program across Western Queensland including the areas of Cloncurry, Longreach. Barcaldine and Charleville. Specific projects have been identified by Shire Councils. The Councils will support CCA in lobby the State and Federal Governments. CCA has a coordinator based in Longreach who will support the program and help identify funding.

CCA will continue to pursue further partnerships and grants for additional programs across 2020.

Currently we have administration support in the areas of accounting, social media and grant writing. This will be further expanded in 2020 to include fundraising, volunteer management and marketing. We will continue to source volunteers for our programs in rural and remote Australia.

We are delighted to announce that in February we'll have an intern from New York University supporting our work 2 days a week. Cecilia Shi is majoring in psychology. Her focus will be on evaluation measures and our Aboriginal program.

CCA is looking to add additional members to the Board to add to our governance structure and help us reach out to potential new corporate partners.

In 2020 we will develop a strategic three year plan focusing on a sustainable expanded program. The program will be developed alongside mental health organisations to ensure CCA can provide both practical, social and mental wellbeing support. The target areas will be the smaller rural and remote communities including schools that are suffering most from our changing climate.

As we reach out into 2020 and beyond our aim is to make Australia stronger, fairer and more equitable by supporting and connecting these vulnerable communities.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

There are many ways you can get involved with or support Connecting Communities:

- Keep in touch – connect with us on social media (see back cover)
- Make a donation – visit connectingcommunitiesaustralia.com.au/donations/donation/
- Become a volunteer – email info@austcc.com.au
- Become a sponsor – email info@austcc.com.au

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instagram.com/connectingcommunitiesaus

Your contribution can make a significant difference to the outback farms and communities we work with. **To make a donation, please visit www.connectingcommunitiesaustralia.com.au/donations/donation/**

Thank you!



**CONNECTING
COMMUNITIES**
AUSTRALIA

