Lifeline Connect



Welcome to Edition 5 of Lifeline Connect!

In this issue, we'll update you on the latest happenings across all areas of Lifeline Mid Coast. This issue is all about appreciation, recognising the dedication, achievements, and everyday impact of our amazing staff, volunteers, and supporters.

Thank you for being an essential part of the Lifeline family.

Lifeline
MID COAST

CEO Corner



Catherine Vaara
CEO

Dear Lifeline Mid Coast Community,

As we wrap up a fast-paced first quarter, I'm proud to share the progress, challenges, and heartfelt moments that have shaped our journey so far under the 2025–2030 Strategic Plan.

This quarter marked the rollout of our new Organisational Chart, a visual representation of the structural changes designed to support our growth and mission. We have welcomed **Max Schaapveld** as Lifeline Mid Coast Retail Division Manager. I would also like to acknowledge **Di Bannister** and **Kelly Saidey** who have stepped out of old roles and into new roles as our Training Program Manager and Senior Services Manager.

We bid a fond farewell to **David Hore**, who served with excellence as Acting Retail Division Manager and wish him all the best in his new adventure, retirement. The Organisational Chart has another new role, Communications & Engagement Specialist. This role is currently in recruitment, further strengthening our outreach and engagement capabilities.

One of the most difficult decisions this quarter was to not re-open our beloved Taree Shop, which suffered a second flood in two years. We honour **Samie Ferris**, our Taree Shop Manager, along with **Mary**, Taree's Volunteer Shop Leader, for creating a warm and welcoming space for the community. Their contributions will be celebrated at a special morning tea. While this closure is a deep loss, we remain committed to re-engaging with the Taree community and hope to re-establish a shop when the time is right.

Balancing this sadness, we were able to celebrate our incredible volunteers, a little later than planned. Board members **Neville Parsons**, **Tony Fleming**, and **Peter Orford** heard firsthand how volunteering impacts our volunteer lives and how our volunteers support our services. It was a joy to mingle, share stories, and exchange ideas with our volunteers, staff and Board members.

Exciting news: Our new Kempsey Shop at 51 Smith St is in the final stages of renovation. A grand opening is on the horizon, and we can't wait to welcome the community into this vibrant new space.

Professional development has taken centre stage. We hosted Centre-wide manager training led by **Nicole Turnbull** on Minimising Harmful Behaviours. This was followed by our Crisis Services team and service participants attending a powerful day of learning with **Kerrie Sellen** on Restorative Journeys: "What is not fixed is repeated" and **Dr. Helen Lawson Williams** on Preventing Burnout: "Putting the brakes on Burnout"

Looking ahead, staff will begin training on new IT platforms to enhance our administrative efficiency. I deeply appreciate the team's resolve and openness to embrace these changes.

As I watch the sun set in hues of pink and orange, I pause with gratitude - for our team, our Board, and our community. Together, we are honouring our values of integrity, compassion, respect, excellence, flexibility, and innovation.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Here's to continued growth, resilience, and connection.

Board Update



Neville Parsons
Board Chair

As we reflect on the first quarter of this financial year, I note the continued transformation of Lifeline Mid Coast and the exceptional commitment shown by each of you. Since joining the Board in December 2022, I have continued to appreciate the time, energy, and effort you contribute - whether in management, staff, or volunteer roles.

Lifeline Mid Coast only functions because of you - your passion and belief in what we collectively achieve to enhance the wellbeing of our community. Together, we connect those in need with the support, care, and comfort provided by our many dedicated teams.

As I have acknowledged many times, we rely on our Lifeline Shops to fund most of our services. Our shops not only provide essential financial support to enable Lifeline Mid Coast to deliver our critical services but also offer affordable, quality goods and volunteering opportunities that make a real difference in our community.

I also wish to acknowledge the important contribution of David Hore as Acting Retail Division Manager. On behalf of the Board, I extend our thanks and best wishes to David. It was also a pleasure to participate in the interview process that led to the appointment and welcoming of Max Schaapveld as our new Retail Division Manager.

As highlighted in Catherine's CEO message, it is encouraging to see new opportunities emerging through our Strategic Plan. Congratulations to Kelly Saidey and Di Bannister on their new roles, which are pivotal to delivering on that plan. I also want to acknowledge the great work and commitment that went into organising and delivering the Walk Out of the Shadows event - thank you to everyone involved.

Finally, thank you for embracing the direction set within our Strategic Plan, focused on our four key pillars:

- Our customers, participants and community
- Our people and our culture
- Our finances
- Our systems and processes

Together we are working towards "An Australia free of suicide" through being "Committed to being a steadfast leader in crisis support and suicide prevention, reaching out to those in need and standing by our community through every season, fostering support and resilience."

Thank you for your ongoing dedication - it is deeply appreciated.

Regards,
Neville Parsons.



Volunteer Recognition Week

Originally planned for May, our Volunteer Recognition Week was postponed due to the devastating floods that impacted our region. In the wake of such a challenging time, the strength, resilience, and unwavering commitment of our volunteers shone even brighter. While the timing may have changed, the spirit of gratitude remained stronger than ever.

Over the past few weeks, majority of our shops were able to come together to enjoy a morning tea or meal, share some laughs, stories, and talents, and take a moment to reflect on just how much our volunteers mean to us.

Our CEO, Board Members and Retail Divisional Manager joined many of the gatherings, taking the opportunity to thank everyone personally and unveil our brand-new Volunteer shirts - a small token of appreciation for the big impact our volunteers make every day.

Sadly, our Taree Shop was unable to reopen following a second major flood in two years. This was not an easy decision, and our thoughts remain with everyone affected. Their efforts will be acknowledged and celebrated at a special morning tea. Though the shop doors have closed, our connection with Taree remains strong, and we look forward to continuing to support the community in meaningful ways.

Thank you to each and every one of our volunteers – you truly are the heart of Lifeline.

Lifeline SHOP

Lifeline SHOP

Staff Updates



Farewell David

From stepping into the role unexpectedly to becoming a key part of our team, David brought all seven shops together and truly created a sense of Lifeline family across both the stores and the office. With a natural disaster thrown into the mix, we can't thank him enough for going above and beyond - enjoy your well-earned retirement, David!

Good bye

Welcome Max



While he's only been in the role a few months, it's already clear that Max has hit the ground running. Stepping into the Retail Divisional Manager position with confidence, fresh ideas, and a clear vision, he's already started to bring great structure and focus to our team. We're excited to have him on board and look forward to the direction and leadership he'll bring as we continue to grow and strengthen our Lifeline Mid Coast family. Welcome aboard, Max!

welcome

Lifeline SHOP

Taree Shop

Earlier this year, flooding caused major damage to our Taree shop, leading to its closure while repairs were arranged. With delays in the process, we have made the tough decision not to re-open the shop. We want to take this moment to celebrate Samie, our wonderful shop manager, and the dedicated team of volunteers who made the Taree shop such a warm and welcoming place. Their kindness, hard work, and community spirit touched so many lives. While some have joined our Wingham shop, many including Samie have moved on, and we thank them all sincerely for the heart they brought to Lifeline. Their contribution will always be remembered with appreciation. **For anyone in the Taree community who would like to continue supporting Lifeline, we warmly welcome new volunteers to join our Wingham shop team.** Your time and support make a real difference.

Kempsey Shop

We're delighted to share that our Kempsey shop is on the move! Soon, we'll be opening the doors to a brand-new space just around the corner on Smith Street. The new shop will feature the latest in Lifeline branding and design, along with a fresh new fit-out for both the shop floor and sorting room. With a bright, open layout and improved accessibility, this space will make it even easier for our community to browse, connect, and support the work of Lifeline. We look forward to welcoming you to our new home very soon, and we can't wait to share this exciting new chapter with our wonderful Kempsey community.

Volunteering Made Easier!

Becoming a Lifeline volunteer has never been easier. We've just launched a new online Volunteer Application Form that covers both our shops and crisis support roles. This means anyone interested in joining our wonderful team can apply quickly and easily through the Lifeline website. To make it even simpler, all of our posters and shop signage will soon feature QR codes - just scan with your phone, and you'll be taken straight to the application form. Volunteers are the heart of Lifeline, and we're excited to make the process of joining our community of helpers smoother than ever.

Lifeline SHOP

BREAKING NEWS

Forster in the Local Spotlight



FORSTER FORTNIGHTLY

Community News www.forsterfort

Donations to Lifeline are for suicide prevention support

By Mary Yule – Forster Fortnightly

Dannielle Tattersall has worked as the Store Manager of Forster Lifeline on Breese Parade for the past year.

"I love it here. It's great."

Danielle thanks everybody for donating goods to the store and also thanks the volunteers doing such a great job in these hard times.

"Our wonderful volunteers work hard during the week and weekends too so it's heartbreaking to see them spend so much time cleaning up donated goods left outside that has been rummaged though and spread all over the place. We have to pay for these damaged goods to be taken to the local tip."

Danielle said they have had to install more security cameras recently and are shocked by what they see.

"We've been able to view all the footage of what happens after hours. It's actually an offence to take donated items. I don't think people realise that they are taking money away that is meant to help suicide prevention and support groups. We are working with local police to resolve this issue."

"Some people might not realise everything we do at Lifeline. The money we make helps with suicide prevention, not just for our Lifeline phone lines, but also for the suicide support groups Eclipse, H2R and SIS."

Eclipse support groups is an 8 week program that teaches specific skills to reduce suicidality while increasing resilience and behaviours that can assist in people identifying the need and seeking help when they need it. The Holding on to Hope podcast (H2H) is designed to safely share the experiences of people who have struggled with suicidality. Site Intervention Service (SIS) is support to communities who have identified increased risk in either their local area or common space.

Danielle thanks and reminds people to please drop off donated goods inside the store between 9am and 3pm Monday to Friday.

Above: (L-R) Lifeline volunteers Cathy Wellfare, Kathy Bennett, Annette Cox, Mel Robertson, Marie Sofiak with Forster Lifeline Manager and Danielle Tattersall. Photo by Mary Yule.

Clipping from Forster Fortnightly Featuring Danielle (Forster Shop Manager) and team!

We're thrilled to share that one of our Lifeline shops was recently featured in the ***Forster Fortnightly!***

The article included some lovely words from Danielle, our Forster shop manager, highlighting the heart and hard work that goes into everything our staff and volunteers do.

This kind of recognition is not just a proud moment for our local shop, but for Lifeline Mid Coast as a whole.

Congratulations to everyone involved!

On a more serious note, we truly appreciate the article's role in raising awareness about the impact of our shops. ***Every purchase made, contributes directly to funding our suicide prevention services*** *- services that support our local community every day.*

A beautiful photo and a meaningful read!

Professional Development Day



Kerrie Sellen *is a trainer and Director of Restorative Journeys and a Director at the Practice Institute. She specialises in restorative practice - helping individuals, teams, and organisations build wellbeing, connection, and accountability. Drawing on her experience developing Re-Engage Youth Services into one of Australia's top workplaces, Kerrie now supports others to embed restorative approaches across all areas of work and community life.*



Dr Helen Lawson Wilson *has a PhD in Organisational Psychology and is the co-founder of Tank – the app that fights burnout. Helen co-founded TANK when she realised that burnout had become a global epidemic. After 20 years in management consulting, coaching high performing teams and clients to do their best work while looking after their health, she's convinced that burnout is a solvable problem.*

Through engaging presentations from **Kerrie Sellen** (Restorative Journeys) and **Dr Helen Lawson Williams** (TANK), attendees explored how restorative practice and energy management can protect against burnout, build resilience, and strengthen the way we support others in crisis.

For our Crisis Support Volunteers, the sessions offered valuable insights and practical tools to apply both during calls and in their personal self-care - helping them to maintain energy and compassion in their lifesaving work.

It was also inspiring to see participants from our programs step out of their comfort zones to connect with our Lifeline family, growing in confidence and developing skills to support their own wellbeing.

The day was an opportunity to connect, reflect, and recharge reinforcing the importance of caring for ourselves as we care for others. Volunteers shared thoughtful insights, laughter, and renewed commitment to Lifeline's mission of compassion and hope.

We thank everyone who joined us and those who made the day possible. Your dedication to learning and growth continues to make a lasting difference in our community.













Out and About With LLMC

Senior Expo

We had some really great conversations at the Seniors Expo with people over 55, many of whom shared personal stories and reflections. There was a real appreciation for the work Lifeline does - people acknowledged how heavy it can be, but also how incredibly important and life-changing our services are. It was heartening to see so much interest in getting involved, with lots of chats about volunteering. Many were keen to learn more about joining the Lifeline community and finding new ways to connect, give back, and find purpose.

Nyiirun Djiyagan Wakulda Women's Festival

Lifeline Mid Coast was honoured to attend the Annual Nyiirun Djiyagan Wakulda Women's Festival - a celebration of culture, connection, and community. Our participants and peer workers enjoyed meaningful conversations sparked by the day, while also soaking up the atmosphere of delicious food and stalls run by local Aboriginal businesses. Some of our team even picked up beautiful handmade jewellery as a keepsake of the day. We are grateful to have been invited and proud to stand alongside our Aboriginal community as allies, celebrating the strength and creativity of First Nations women.

NEAMI Cup

Earlier this month, Lifeline was proud to attend the annual Neami Cup - a vibrant event that brings together local community services to promote mental health awareness, connection, and a bit of friendly competition. While we didn't field a soccer team this year, we were there in full cheer squad mode, supporting the teams and connecting with other organisations and attendees throughout the day. It was fantastic to see so many services uniting around a common goal: building a stronger, more connected community.

Out and About With LLMC

Senior Expo







Senior Expos AUSTRALIA

Nyiirun Djiyagan Wakulda Women's Festival







Djiyagan Dhanbaan Strong sister initative

NEAMI Cup







neami national
Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing

Lifeline Mid Coast Services

BLOOM
Suicidal Ideation Self-Harm Support Group

This September marked the completion of the pilot round of Bloom, Lifeline Mid Coast's newest support group. Designed for individuals who experience suicidal ideation or use self-harm, Bloom provides a safe, non-judgmental space where participants can connect with others who share similar lived experiences.

Throughout the 6-week program, the group created a supportive environment to openly talk about suicide and self-harm, conversations that are often veiled in stigma. Participants were able to explore coping strategies and tools to support themselves in healthier, more sustainable ways.

The feedback from this pilot has been overwhelmingly positive, with participants highlighting the value of feeling heard and understood. We're hopeful that Bloom will become a regular offering at LLMC in the near future.

A huge thank you to everyone who helped bring Bloom to life, including the hard work from our volunteers who raise vital funds to support our programs. Your commitment to creating safe spaces is making a real difference.

"Bloom helped me say 'I deserve better' and live as if I believe it" - Bloom Participant



Kelly Saidey
Service Manager

It has been a busy and rewarding time for our team. Ebanie has recently completed the first pilot of our new Bloom group, which received some truly heartwarming feedback. Ebanie has also been leading the Eclipse groups – co facilitated by Karen. Eclipse keeps filling to capacity with a new cycle beginning on 16 October. Lea has been invited by Lifeline Western Australia to co-facilitate Eclipse online and has now been contracted for another consecutive cycle - a wonderful recognition of her skills and dedication. We were sad to farewell our H2R Peer Support Worker, Jade. Jade has been such an asset to our team, building strong and meaningful connections with participants. While we miss her greatly, we wish her every success as she pursues her Environmental Science studies. Our volunteer Peer Support Worker, Daniel, has been working hard to complete training as a co-facilitator for both Eclipse and Bereavement groups. He has now completed training with Didi Hirsch as well as Lifeline Crisis Support training - an outstanding achievement. Recruitment for new staff is also underway, and we look forward to introducing them to you in upcoming newsletters. I am deeply grateful to the team for their incredible work with Out of the Shadows. A special thank you to Luke, who's moving "Ode to Lifeline" set the tone for the walk from Salty Crew Kiosk. His words, shaped by his lived experience of suicide bereavement, touched everyone present and added a profound sense of meaning to the event. As many of you know, Lifeline Mid Coast has recently undergone some organisational restructuring. As part of this process, I have accepted the role of Service Manager, which will see me working more closely with the crisis support team in addition to continuing my work with the Suicide Prevention and Postvention team. These changes will not affect participants or volunteers directly, but will strengthen the way we manage, plan, and report behind the scenes. On a personal note, I am excited to be working more closely with 13 11 14 again - where my journey began 12 years ago as a volunteer crisis supporter.

Warm Regards,

Kelly Saidey.

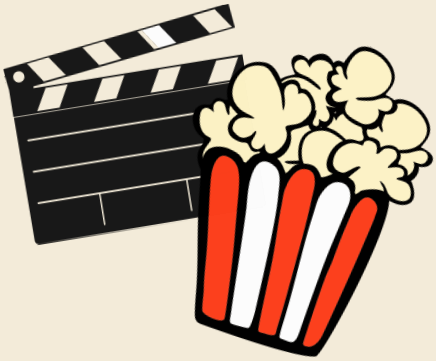
Reach for Help - Cinemas

Reach for Help Week is an annual initiative started by Kieren Dell, CEO of Majestic Cinemas. This event holds close sentiment to Keiren as it is in memory of his daughter Maddy, who died by suicide.

Each year this event runs for 1 week, and $1 from every movie ticket sold will go to Lifeline Mid Coast. This is in hopes of opening conversations about suicide, sparking awareness and to raise vital funds for Lifeline Mid Coast to continue providing services to the community.



Kieren Dell
CEO Majestic Cinemas



$2461 RAISED

"Reach for Help week will be an annual event held in honour of my daughter Maddy and every other family that has lost loved ones, in the hope we can help to prevent it happening in future."

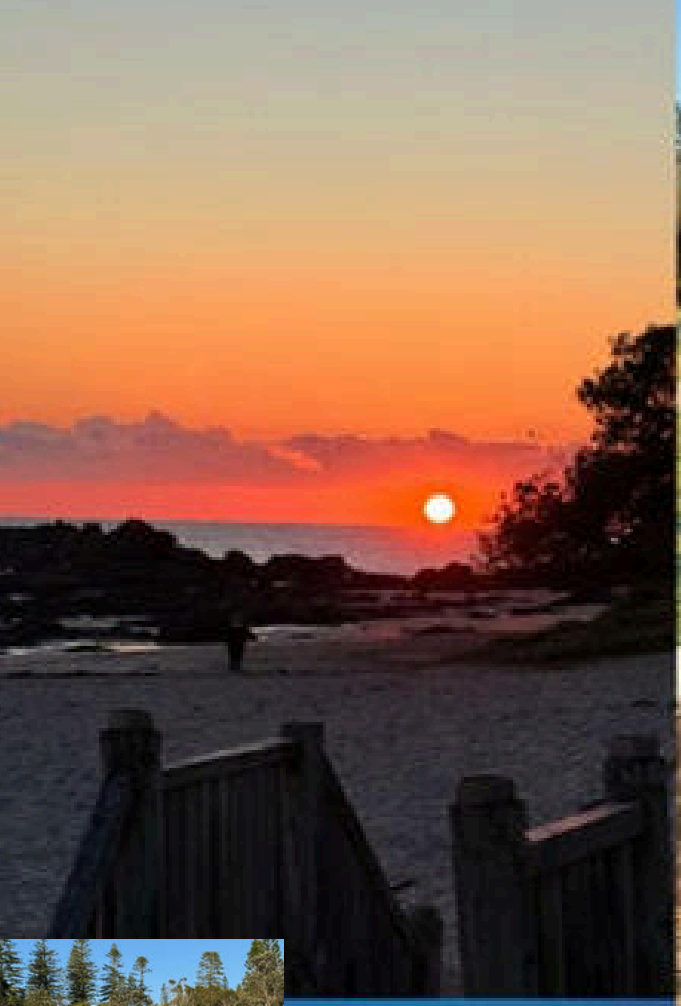
"There was a time when people didn't mention the word suicide, it wasn't talked about enough."

"Whilst our business is a place of entertainment, it can also be a place of education and we can use our voice to inform our local communities of the support services that are available to them"

REACH FOR HELP WEEK

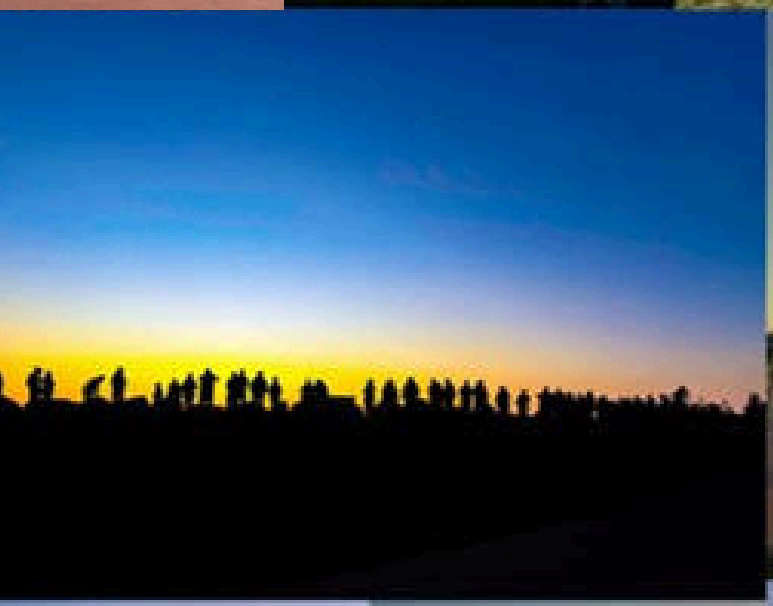
YOUR LOCAL MAJESTIC PORT MACQUARIE CINEMA

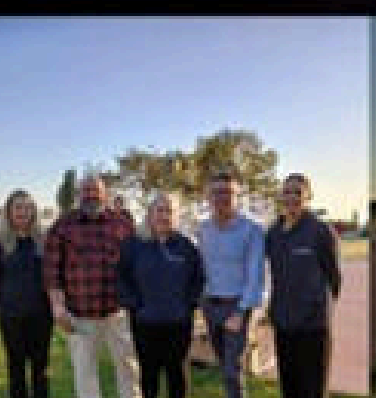
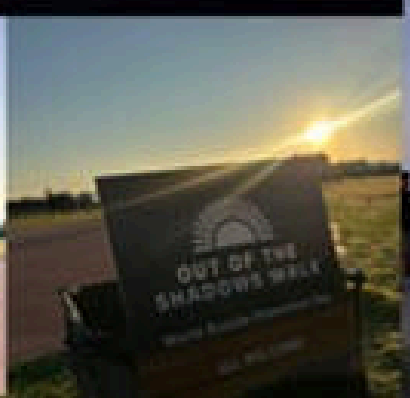
YOUR LOCAL Riverside MOVIES KEMPSEY CINEMA












OUT OF THE
SHADOWS WALK



Out of the Shadows 2025

On Sunday 14th September, our community gathered in the early hours to walk Out of the Shadows, marking World Suicide Prevention Day.

Our Out of the Shadows Walk is held annually around this time, beginning at 5:00am to symbolically walk out of the darkness and into the sunrise. Unlike larger national events, Lifeline Mid Coast's walk remains intentionally intimate, personal, and awareness-focused - a space for connection, remembrance, and hope.

The morning began with an Acknowledgement of Country delivered by **Kathy Graham**, followed by The Ode to Lifeline read beautifully by **Luke**, one of our Peer Workers. **Catherine Vaara**, Lifeline Mid Coast CEO, then shared a few heartfelt words before leading the walk.

As the sun rose, participants made their way along the candle-lit footpath towards the breakwall, pausing for a moment of silence to honour all those who have been touched by suicide and to remember loved ones lost. The group then gathered at the amphitheatre, where each person placed a flower in the communal basket and a memory sign bearing their loved one's name - a simple but powerful act of remembrance and connection.

The morning continued with reflections from **Robert Dwyer - MP**, **Adam Roberts - Mayor**, and **Kelly Saidey - Manager of Suicide Prevention Services**, each sharing words of compassion and hope. Before leaving, attendees received reflection packs to take home - gentle reminders of self-care and connection beyond the event.

Looking back on this year's walk, we are reminded of what Lifeline's mission truly means in action - being there for one another, holding space for grief, and walking together toward hope. Seeing members of our community who have faced their own challenges come together with courage and compassion reinforces why we do this work.



October 2025
Lifeline Connect

Next Newsletter January 2025

Submission Due December 2025

Lifeline Mid Coast
We are local.