



LICOLA WILDERNESS VILLAGE

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C.E.O. Annual Report, April 1st, 2017 – March 31st, 2018

Lions Village Licola (LVL) has remained in the black for the 6th successive annual period.

As a Social Enterprise, we focus on a much bigger picture than just our finances. Yes, the Camp is getting better and better with much needed projects achieved each year. Yes, the Camp is becoming more economically viable with every passing year, and that success is in part due to each of you.

Last year, I talked about the word “*success*” and what it really means. Last year I split the word success into three areas;

1. “*SOCIAL SUCCESS*” – 800 disadvantaged, deserving, disabled, and disengaged children have been on a program in Licola this year. We have improved and added to these programs in many ways including ‘Colour War’ (Lions Sponsored Camps) and a post-course contact Water-ski Day (Wild4 Participants).
2. “*CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SUCCESS*” – in Licola we seek to wow our returning guests within the first few minutes of their arrival by adding something new, something needed. This helps ensure visitors will come back time and time again. I have no doubt everyone will be pleasantly surprised by the improvements made this year.
3. “*FINANCIAL SUCCESS*” – the ability to return a modest surplus to ensure the longevity of the site. We have.

Everything we do in Licola is to underpin the charity. In an ever-evolving market place, one with many challenges, LVL has continued to deliver. Our LSCs (eight to 11-year olds), Special Needs Camps (all ages) and Wild4/ Youth at Risk Program (12 to 15-year olds) received some wonderful feedback and real, genuine good news stories.

SPONSORED CAMPS

- LSCs - We successfully transitioned from the old system of Lions Volunteers coordinating the Lions Sponsored Camps (LSCs) to a paid position out of the Licola Office. This has been beneficial and in having access to information in “real time” directly contributed to extra children enjoying one of the Camps. Over 600 children attended an LSC this year.

The introduction of t-shirts for every child has added a gift & memory to treasure for all LSC children. This year we were also lucky enough to be able to put all volunteers in a t-shirt thanks to another wonderful donation from the LC of Reservoir. These t-shirts not only look professional and are a lovely keepsake, but also add an added safety element to drop off and pick up points. All kids & volunteers can be seen a mile off.

Over the last 12 months a new and wonderful relationship developed with The Gippsland Country Music Club. Led by Rod and Rhonda Owen, the Club bring 18 ukuleles to one or more Sponsored Camps and all children are given the opportunity to learn a couple of simple songs. This year these songs were, ‘You Are My Sunshine’ and ‘Riptide’. On the final night all the kids get on the stage and play and sing. If this doesn’t put a lump of happiness in your

throat, not much will! Type “Licola Music Program” into your search engine and check it out on YouTube.

The 123Read2Me project has continued to provide hundreds of books to the children that visit on all LSCs. This continues as a very worthwhile extension to the program.

- Special Needs - It is impossible to pick the greatest news story of the year for LVL but in April 2017 the new river access was officially opened with Cerebral Palsy sufferer, Josh, using it for the first time. For me personally it was not just one of the highlights of the year but also for the whole of my 10-years on the job. The LC of Myrtleford are owed a debt of gratitude and thanks from anyone that cares about what we deliver in Licola. You can view the moment Josh took to the water on the Licola YouTube page, 2018 Promotional Video.
- Wild4 - In December we again ran this unique program for disengaged/ disengaging teenagers, or for those considered at an increased risk. This year changes included dropping the kids 80km away and have them expedition back to base camp (Licola) under their own steam over the 10-days.

19 boys out of the 20 allocated places turned up on Day 1 this year which, given the demographic and nature of the program, was an outstanding achievement. Two boys returned as Student Mentors to the first-time participants, having completed the course themselves previously.

We added an additional catch up day to the program this year. Three months after Wild4, in March, we partnered up with Maffra Lions Club and Frog Water Ski. The boys were offered a day out on Lake Glenmaggie with 2 speed boats, water skiing, wake boarding and other fun stuff. The Maffra Lions Club organised transport from Traralgon train station and did a BBQ lunch. One Lions Member of 20+ years described the day as the single best in all his years as a Lions member. It was a good way to catch up with the boys.

It was lovely to get a phone call from Young Person (YP) “JJ” from the 2015 Wild4 Program to say that he now lived in his own rented accommodation paying all his own bills. He had finished Year 10 and was working full time, but more excitingly had been offered a snow board instructor job in Canada.

One participant, this year, we believed had taken very little in the way of learnings returned home, left his existing friendship group stating that he could see where they were heading and that he didn't want that, and re-engaged with his school who had previously expelled him.

Without donations from various Clubs and organisations Wild4 – 2017 would not have been possible. Thank you to the late Lion Dudley Barton Adams, The Paul Family Foundation, Lion Carol Kavanagh, and Lions Clubs Traralgon, Box Hill, Rye, Geelong & Corio Bay, Wheelers Hill and Vermont.

Other Programs & Camp Use

Open 365 days, we underpin the charity by filling the Camp with a great number of other types of booking. Weekends continue to exceed expectations with many small family bookings and more, large, all site bookings using the facility for weddings and group or club events.

External Provider (Youth Flourish Outdoors Inc.) set up a training course here that was well attended by chaplains and care workers in the surrounding areas from Maffra, Sale, Casey and Bairnsdale. The course was on *Trauma Focussed Adventure Therapy*. It was so well received

that we are running this opportunity again in the current year.

We seek feedback from our user groups and the below are a few of the comments received in the past 12 months;

from Deakin University: *“Thank you so much for all your patience with myself and DCS over the past year whilst leading up to our weekend. We really do love Licola and your staff. We feel so welcomed and comfortable on your grounds and would love to come back to Licola again next year!”*

from a weekend family: *“THANK YOU VERY MUCH. We had an absolute ball again this weekend. As always we had a blast at the park – It is GREAT for the families and a great location.”*

about children coming to LSC: *“Just spoke to Kieran, he is so pleased for the opportunity. He was saying that a couple of the families burst into tears with the offer as they could not afford anything for Christmas for the children and this will be a gift for them and make them extremely happy. I thought this was wonderful for you and the Vermont Lions Club to know, the impact it has on some families – thank you.”*

Staffing

At 31 March 2018, the full-time team in Licola comprised of;

- Adam Wake (CEO/ Operations Manager) – E: manager@licola.org.au
- Rob Strachan (Camp Manager) – E: camping@licola.org.au
- Sharna Jolliffe (Program Manager/LSC Coordinator) – E: programmanager@licola.org.au
- TBC (FT Maintenance Department)
- Jodie “Casper” Scanlon (Cleaning Department)

These staff were backed up by part time, contract and casual staff including;

- Cherry Wake (Training and LSC Volunteer liaison) – E: camping@licola.org.au
- Daniel Byrne (Programs) – E: d.byrne.licola@gmail.com
- Liv Kearny (Chef)
- Mick “Horrie” Allman (maintenance)
- Greg “Greasy” Fluck (maintenance)

Maintenance

In 2017-18 Capital Improvements have included;

- Lockable canoe rack housing 15 boats
- Additional pathways around camp for better access, particularly for those in wheelchairs.
- With the help of sponsoring Clubs, we have updated several cabin heaters.
- Because of many leaks in the stadium we have now replaced all LaserLite sheets, downpipes and guttering.
- New floor coverings in Cabin #1
- Restumping has progressed with another house completed.
- John Brady returned to add *The Ol’ Bushy* to our growing collection of chainsaw sculptures.
- A new bathroom in Cabin 8 with an accessible toilet now being added.

Lions & Lionesses - *“Licola is your jewel so come here and experience it for yourself!”*

Each year I feel concerned that I may omit to mention your Club when you have assisted so kindly of your time and funding but there are just so many individuals and Clubs that enjoy input in some way or another – we thank you all.

I attended a few meetings throughout the year being asked to present to several Clubs. I always enjoy this, meeting Lions Members across the State. If your Club would like to hear more about Licola from me in person then get in touch. Better still if you can combine with other Clubs in your District or Zone.

House Sponsorship is evolving. Whilst it is sad to see long standing Clubs such as Werribee handing over the reins of “their” Cabin sponsorship, it is then lovely to see a new Club come on board. Bairnsdale LC are now officially the sponsor of Cabin #6. There are options to co-sponsor a house with one or more other Clubs, and this is in fact, possibly the best way forward. We are currently considering taking on some corporate sponsorship agreements.

The LC of Leongatha did a great job with their bathroom renovation at the rear of Cabin 8. Boy oh boy, these boys know how to work.

The late Lion Dudley Barton Adams’ estate’s final distributions saw an additional \$30,000 coming into general funds this year. Thank you.

Working Bees

These are always a joy although numbers have not been as high as in past years. Come along to join in the great camaraderie during 2018-19.

Kurnai College with their VCAL students have continued to deliver with two visits this year completing various projects. This is a relationship that we aim to continue.

Publicity/ marketing

- New generic fliers were printed and are doing the rounds (let us know if you would like some to pass out at your sausage sizzles or other event).
- The new adaptive website became operational.
- We finally have a new internet provider – better price – more data.
- New video clips have been made and are excellent. With LVL now on YouTube you can view all videos by typing into your search engine “Licola YouTube”. You can view all clips, old and new, going back as far as 1967 but I recommend you check out the “*Sneak Peek*”, the “*2018 Promotional Video*”, and “*Wild4*”.
- We featured in the Gippsland Country Music Club magazine.
- Live at Spectrum – on TV. A 6-minute clip on the Gippsland Country Music Club teaching LSC children how to play the ukulele. Awesome to watch and can also be viewed on YouTube.
- Our Facebook page reached 2,000 followers – are you a friend of Licola on Facebook? A simple thing you can do to help spread the good word of Licola is to **Like** us on Facebook (get your Club/ District signed up if you are not already) and Share our more interesting posts. This is a free, simple, quick and efficient way of spreading our news.
- We continue to have a prime advertising position on our accrediting body’s website.
- The Wellington Shire’s *People’s Choice Tourism Awards* saw us with another win this time in the category of “*Best Visitor Attraction*”.

Other

Work towards alternative/ renewable power courses was placed on hold for the year but will be looked at again during 2018-19. Quotes were extremely high with a back drop of rapidly changing and improving technology. The options considered did not allow for the complete shutdown of generators for any significant period and diesel costs have remained low again this year, with energy efficiency measures adopted already providing savings. It is expected that as

technology continues to improve and a likely rise of diesel will drive the need to put this back on the table soon.

\$10 - \$15,000 worth of equipment (including canoes and a canoe trailer) was donated by Monterey Secondary College and a Hiace Van from the Red Cross (originally donated to the Red Cross Emergency Services from various Lions Clubs).

The owners of Glenfalloch Station, the Paul family and overseers, have continued to support LVL with monetary contributions to Wild4 and in allowing us access to the awesome property that they own.

The refurbished (88 Kva) generator from two years ago broke down and is not something we will entertain again. A new 110Kva genset was installed to replace the old 88.

Fulham Prisoners continue to come out and work on general maintenance at LVL and relationships with the Wellington Shire Council, DELWP, WGCMA, Gippsland Water, and Parks Victoria all remain positive.

One group who slipped through the net with regard a thank you in recent years is the amazing Gippsland Water. Not only did they, 10-years ago, fit our potable water treatment facility, but they continue to monitor, visit & calibrate this vital equipment. The confidence that this gives the whole town of Licola should not be understated. Thank you, Gippy Water.

Major aims for next year include:

- Continue developing our programs to make them the best that they can be.
- Continued cabin improvements through developing Club sponsorship arrangements.
- Continuing with Operation Restump.
- Find funding to renovate and renew our aging dining hall facility.
- Restart our consideration of renewable energy sources.

I will close with the same statement as last year because I believe it sums things up well enough. Thank you to all Lions, Lionesses, The Board of Directors and corporates or individuals who have sponsored LVL or children in one way or another. Anyone that has sent a child, children, or funding please know in your hearts that it is an amazing experience for all, and a life changing experience for some. Don't underestimate the value that the Camp adds to some of these kids' lives.

Adam Wake



CEO/ Operations Manager

Lions Village Licola Inc.

