In this issue...

02 A message from Vicki O’Halloran, NT Disability Service Awards
03 Dancing with the Celebrities Gala Ball
04 AIM Excellence Awards
05 Telstra Business Women’s Awards
06 Disability Awareness Festival
07 National Child Protection Week, Children’s Week
08 Katherine Youth and Family Services
09 Anti-Poverty Week
10 Responsible Gambling Awareness Week
11 WHS Morning Tea, NT Young Achievers Award
12 Christmas appeals
14 NDS Forum, Seniors Expo and Awards
15 Making the news this quarter
16 Staff Profile – Vicki Borzi

NT Disability Service Awards

The Northern Territory Government Department of Health in collaboration with National Disability Services NT recently hosted the 2015 Northern Territory Disability Services Awards.

Now in their fifth year, the Awards set out to promote the value of a career in the disability sector and celebrate the positive contributions of the Northern Territory community in creating opportunities for people with a disability.

They also offer an opportunity to recognise exceptional individuals working in the disability sector together with government and non-government services, organisations, businesses and programs which demonstrate outstanding commitment to improving the lives of people with a disability.

Continued on page 2...

Main photo: Somerville’s Disability Services Coordinator, Mavis White, won the “Outstanding Disability Service Employee” at the NT Disability Services Awards. Mavis is pictured here with Somerville staff and supporters.
A message from our CEO – Vicki O’Halloran AM

In the lead up to Christmas in our 50th year we are preparing hampers and readying ourselves for our gift wrapping fundraisers at the following three venues:

• Casuarina Square (4-24 December)
• Palmerston (4-24 December)
• Mitchell Centre, Darwin (11-24 December)

Our Somerville Choir will perform again at Parliament House at Christmas Carols on 10 December after their stellar performance at our 50th Birthday celebration in May.

We were also involved in the recent Dancing with Celebrities Gala Ball where Matt and Natasha looked splendid and danced with style. For me this is the number one function in Darwin for the year and congratulations to Eileen and the team at Total Recreation for organising the event.

Congratulations to Disability Services Coordinator Mavis White who recently won a Disability Service Award (please see story below).

On pages 4 and 5 you will read about the wonderful achievements of two members of the management team, truly remarkable women.

We are also focused on keeping our website up to date with current information about all Somerville happenings, so please take time to visit: www.somerville.org.au.

With the poincianas and frangipanis in full bloom and the humidity rising, it is a good time to say Merry Christmas to all.

Vicki O’Halloran AM
CEO, Somerville Community Services

NT Disability Service Awards (continued…)

And the winners of the NT Disability Awards are:

Emerging Leader Award
Shannon Hallatt, OT for Kids

Excellence in Improving Learning and Development Award
Vanessa Adzaip, DeafNT and Deaf Children Australia

Excellence in Improving Participation Award
Total Recreation
Highly Commended
Jim Bitossi, NT Friendship and Support

Excellence in Promoting Community Awareness Award
Barkly Regional Arts

Excellence in Innovation Award
Henbury School
Highly Commended
MJD Foundation

Outstanding Disability Service Employee Award
Mavis White, Somerville Community Services
Highly Commended
Verena Brady, Helping People Achieve

Outstanding Business and Community Initiative Award
Helping People Achieve
Highly Commended
Danila Dilba Men’s Health Clinic

The winner of the Overall Award for Excellence was presented to Vanessa Adzaip, from DeafNT and Deaf Children Australia.

Congratulations to our very own Mavis White for winning the Outstanding Disability Service Employee Award.

Well done to all the winners and nominees.

Right: Mavis White with Dr. Nathan Zweck from Danila Dilba Men’s Health Clinic who received a Highly Commended award on their behalf.
Dancing with the Celebrities Gala Ball

Total Recreation recently held their major annual fundraising event, a gala ball themed Dancing with the Celebrities.

Total Recreation is a Not for Profit organisation that provides opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in leisure and recreational activities.

The event showcases local celebrities partnered with talented dancers and all couples were vying for the coveted Grand Champion title.

Somerville is proud to be a platinum sponsor of the event and our staff partner with Total Recreation to assist participants to be the best that they can be on the night.

For the seven weeks prior to the Ball, participants came to Somerville once a week and participated in information sessions which included healthy living and personal grooming.

On the day of the Ball professional hairstylists curled, plaited, teased and crimped hair! Volunteers applied make-up and assisted with dressing.

The evening consisted of a scrumptious three course meal, six different dances, a silent auction, a live auction, a raffle and the much anticipated awards ceremony.

Congratulations to our own Matthew Lucas, partner Natasha Fyles MLA and all participants – the calibre of dancers keeps getting better and better each year.

For more information please visit the Total Recreation website at: www.totalrecreation.org.au

Matthew Lucas and Natasha Fyles MLA competing in the ‘Gypsy Tap’ champion award.

Matthew and Natasha receiving applause after receiving their Competitors Sash.

Participants practicing their dance moves at sunset.
Australian Institute of Management Excellence Awards

The Australian Institute of Management’s (AIM) National Excellence Awards were held in Melbourne this year and Somerville is pleased to announce that HR, IT and Administrative Services Manager, Liza Metcalfe represented the Northern Territory at the awards.

Liza has previously won the Northern Territory Not for Profit Manager of the Year category for being best in her field at the Northern Territory Excellence Awards, held in Darwin.

“It’s the most rewarding job as I’m surrounded by dedicated people who share the same goals as I do which is all about empowering others.”

At the National Awards Liza was up against seven other finalists. The eventual winner was Marcus Stafford, CEO, Multiple Sclerosis WA Inc. Although Liza did not take out the National Award, being involved in the process clearly provided her with an in-depth self-appraisal, affirmation of her successes and an increased public profile.

The Australian Institute of Management Excellence Awards celebrate the individual contributions and achievements of outstanding managers on a national scale.

The Awards process brings a wide range of business leaders and professionals together as finalists, judges, sponsors and supporters, offering participants a fantastic opportunity to connect with like-minded industry professionals to expand their networks.

Exceptional leaders at all career stages from every industry and sector are represented in the Awards program.

Applicants are short-listed and category finalists are interviewed by a panel of business leaders and senior executives who lend credibility and strength to the process.

The category winners are selected by the State and Territory’s best and most senior leaders who give their time and experience to interview the finalists.

Somerville is consistently recognised as an employer of choice and Liza recently led the organisation in achieving both Certificate and Award levels for Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES).

“Working for a Not for Profit certainly broadens your skill set,” Ms Metcalfe said.

“It’s the most rewarding job as I’m surrounded by dedicated people who share the same goals as I do which is all about empowering others.”

Congratulations Liza.

L-R: The Honourable Peter Styles MLA with Liza Metcalfe and Somerville CEO Vicki O’Halloran AM.

Winner of the AIM Northern Territory Excellence Awards category “Not for Profit Manager of the Year” Liza Metcalfe.

Liza Metcalfe encouraging lifelong learning.
Disability Services, Service Development Manager, Deborah Bampton has taken out the 2015 Telstra NT Business Woman of the Year in the category For Purpose and Social Enterprise.

“...exceptional business women deserve to be celebrated.”

Deborah is responsible for Somerville’s training and development program, the planning, developing and coordination of a social integration program and all administrative functions of the Disability Services program.

The Telstra Business Women’s Awards empower women to take pride in all they have accomplished and set bold goals to achieve even greater success.

Award winners and finalists also join a vibrant Alumni community of like-minded women helping to build a stronger, more productive and relevant Australia. The Awards exist because exceptional business women deserve to be celebrated.

Although we often hear stories of women overcoming hurdles and adversity, working incredibly long hours with gusto to carve a future for themselves and their families in the Northern Territory, many women often do this away from the support of their extended families, juggling work commitments and additional pressures but still going on to become exceptional entrepreneurs.

In her acceptance speech Deborah said “I do what I do for future generations. One person can make a difference and as a group we have a strong voice and can and do make a difference locally and globally.”

Deborah is a tireless worker for both Somerville and the disability service sector and a well-deserved winner.

Congratulations Deborah.
Disability Awareness Festival

The City of Darwin Disability Awareness Festival aims to promote access for; all community events for people with disability; advocate for the rights of people with a disability; and support the artistic, cultural and sporting aspirations of people with disability.

The Festival also provides an opportunity for Somerville and other service providers to distribute information regarding services and activities.

It also aims to encourage the community to think more broadly and creatively about what people with a disability can accomplish.

In 2015 the Disability Awareness Festival was expanded from one to three weeks.

Events included:
- IdA Quiz Night
- Happiness and Wellbeing Market
- Deckchair Cinema – Darwin
- Lawn Bowls
- Rehabilitation Services Open Day – Royal Darwin Hospital
- Fun and Fitness – Lake Alexander
- Open Day – Kokoda Industries
- ‘Reading the Signs’ – Chamber Crescent Theatre

There were also informative events such as ‘Fun Bus in the Park’; a play session for children 0-5 years old; and showcasing toys and equipment designed for children with disabilities.

Somerville Community Services organised the Fun and Fitness event at Lake Alexander which was a great success involving many service users and support workers.

Congratulations to the organisers for arranging a calendar of informative, healthy and enjoyable activities.
National Child Protection Week

National Child Protection Week is an annual campaign to raise awareness about child abuse and neglect in Australia.

Official figures show 40,571 Australian children were recorded as being abused or neglected during 2012-13.

Child abuse and neglect continues to be one of Australia’s most serious and concerning challenges to overcome and Somerville sees first-hand the adverse effects of child abuse.

Informing the public is one of the most effective ways to end child abuse and neglect.

If you need assistance or know someone that does, please phone us on: (08) 8920 4100.

As part of National Child Protection Week 2015 Somerville organised a Family Fun Day to help to educate the community about preventing child abuse and neglect whilst promoting a child-friendly community.

Children’s Week

Children’s Week is an annual event designed to generate awareness and a greater response to the plight of children denied even the most basic necessities, such as education and a happy childhood.

It also celebrates a young person’s right to enjoy childhood and demonstrate their talents, skills and abilities in a supportive and friendly environment.

Somerville’s Family Services collaborated with the City of Palmerston and other agencies to plan the annual Children’s Week Community Event. This year the local theme was Making NT Communities Child Friendly.

The event was held at the Palmerston Recreation Centre and attracted families and children up to five years of age.

All activities promoted child friendly communities and increased awareness of child, family and community services in Palmerston and surrounding areas.

Each family was given an information bag and a Logo Loop activity sheet which encouraged them to visit and obtain stamps from each stall.

The activity sheet also included a survey which families completed to enter a draw to win a book collection prize.

This proved to be a great success for all involved.

More than 13 agencies and organisations were present on the day, each offering their own unique activity for families.

Further entertainment was provided by a variety of entertainers including Yeni the Face Painter, Darwin Castles, Palmerston Library, Tunes and Tales, Blooming Tunes and appearances from a variety of agency mascots.

Somerville created a café area for families to gather and enjoy the free refreshments provided throughout the event.

Over 500 people attended Children’s Week celebration this year, up from 300 in 2014. The event was a great success and it was a pleasure to see so many families and friends enjoying the exciting atmosphere and spending quality time together.
Katherine Youth and Family Services

Staff at Katherine Youth and Family Services welcomes all with open arms as we lead up to Christmas and look forward to some rain to settle the dust.

It’s that time of the year again when the Uniting Care Christmas Gift Box Appeal is on, with support from Target country Katherine.

We have a new staff member, Kelly Camm, who has extensive counselling experience. The Katherine team would like to welcome Kelly and thank her for the contribution she makes to our team.

A recent visitor to the Katherine office was Stephen Dunham, the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner. The Commissioner provides assistance to Territorians to resolve complaints about health, disability and aged services and to make recommendations to government to improve the quality of these services.

David Forder, Katherine Coordinator, presenting a copy of Somerville’s Book ‘Crossing the Divide’ to the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner, Stephen Dunham.

Donated hand knitted blankets for those in need

Somerville’s Katherine office has received some wonderful gifts from knit-one-give-one (KOGO).

KOGO consists of hundreds of volunteer knitters who make a wide range of items including scarves, beanies, blankets, and clothing for adults, children and babies. The finished items are passed onto organisations like Somerville and distributed to people in need including the homeless, children at risk, remote indigenous communities, women in refuges and families struggling to make ends meet.

Some of the blankets have been provided to seniors at the Kalano Aged Care Centre in Katherine whilst baby booties, jumpers, blankets and beanies have been donated to the Katherine Hospital for mothers and their newborn babies.

A well-deserved thank you to KOGO and all your hardworking volunteers.

Somerville staff with the donated knitted blankets which will be gifted to people in need.
Anti-Poverty Week

When we hear the words ‘poverty’ and ‘hunger’ we often think about people doing it tough in Africa and other third world countries.

What we don’t often think about are all the people doing it tough a lot closer to home. Poverty and severe hardship affect more than a million Australians, a situation which is simply deplorable and unacceptable.

Often it is difficult not to get caught up in thinking that Territorians are doing pretty well but in the past 12 months demand for Somerville’s services has increased substantially as more families than ever before present for emergency relief.

The fact is that many members of our own community, our own neighbours and friends are seriously struggling.

“One thing is certain: governments and community organisations like Somerville cannot tackle this problem alone. We need all Australians to pitch in and help.”

As rent and other costs of living rise, people living in poverty struggle to afford basic items. Compared to those who are better off, they spend a greater portion of their income on food. As a result, poorer households and those near the poverty threshold can be particularly vulnerable to increases in food prices. Poverty also increases the risk of homelessness.

Sometimes the talk and commentary around poverty can become so overwhelming it prevents action. To observers, the problems can be so many and varied that it is difficult to know where to start.

One thing is certain: governments and community organisations like Somerville cannot tackle this problem alone. We need all Australians to pitch in and help.

Anti-Poverty Week is a time when everyone is encouraged to organise or take part in an activity aimed at highlighting the issues of poverty and hardship.

If you need assistance or know some who does, please call Somerville on (08) 8920 4100.

Somerville Family Services member Alesha Chatterton presenting students with a ‘goodie bag’ as part of Anti-Poverty Week. During Anti-Poverty Week, Somerville Family Services staff presented to 500 middle school students in the Darwin and Palmerston areas focusing on the effects of poverty and the effective decision making that leads to more successful and healthy futures.
Responsible Gambling Awareness Week – Know When to Take a Break

Responsible Gambling Awareness Week is held every year across Australia to raise awareness of responsible gambling behaviour through informed choices and the adoption of harm minimisation strategies.

The NT Government, in partnership with Amity Community Services has launched new Responsible Gambling Codes of Practice for both physical and online arenas.

“Responsible Gambling Awareness Week promotes the concept of responsible gambling at an individual, government, industry and community level.”

The codes set out mandatory minimum requirements for NT gambling providers to adopt in order to reduce harm associated with problem gambling which will come into effect in March next year.

Amity Community Services Gambling Programme has coordinated Responsible Gambling Awareness Week throughout the Territory for many years. The organisation develops key messages and conducts public health campaigns in a unique partnership between government, industry and community groups.

Responsible Gambling Awareness Week promotes the concept of responsible gambling at an individual, government, industry and community level.

At a personal level, responsible gambling:

• is controlled.
• is within your financial budget and time-limits.
• does not negatively impact on your life or the lives of those around you.

At a community level, including gambling providers, governments and sporting associations, responsible gambling requires;

• shared responsibility for generating community awareness of the risks associated with gambling.
• creating and promoting environments that prevent or minimise problem gambling.
• being responsive to community concerns around gambling.

This year during Responsible Gambling Awareness Week, Somerville’s Problem Gambling Financial Counsellor visited gambling venues in Palmerston and Darwin to meet with venue staff and replenish information on our services. This year’s theme is Know When to Take a Break.

For anyone wishing to take a break from gambling all venue staff are able to assist with the self-exclusion process. Alternatively contact the 24 Hour Gambling Helpline on 1800 858 858.

In association with Responsible Gambling Awareness Week, a problem gambling forum was held in Darwin. Financial Counsellors and Financial Capability Workers from across the Territory attended the forum with presenters from both the Northern Territory and interstate.
Work Health Safety Q&A morning tea

As part of Somerville’s commitment to providing a safe workplace for our staff and clients, we recently held a Work Health Safety (WHS) Q&A morning tea.

Facilitated by our Assets Infrastructure and Maintenance Manager Skye Lee, the focus was on raising awareness of safety in and around the workplace.

The morning also provided staff with a great opportunity to ask questions or raise any Work Health Safety concerns. WHS is an ongoing agenda item at all Somerville team meetings so that our staff continually contribute to making our workplace safe for our ourselves, and our clients.

NT Young Achievers Award officially launched

The Northern Territory Young Achiever Awards have been officially launched for 2016.

The purpose of these Awards is to acknowledge, encourage and promote the positive achievements of young Territorians.

Somerville has been involved for many years and we are proud to be able to recognise the great work young people are performing in the community through the Community Service Award.

This Award recognises young community service workers, who spend their time offering friendship, hope and inspiration to the disadvantaged and those who need it most.

If you know a worthy candidate for this year’s Community Services Award please nominate them and give them the recognition they deserve but don’t normally seek.

For more information go to the Awards Australia website: www.australiaawards.gov.au

Nominations close Tuesday 15 December 2015.

Somerville Manager Skye Lee (second from the right) with Somerville staff at the Work Health Safety Q&A morning tea.

Channel Nine Darwin General Manager, Mr Andy Bruyn officially launching the Northern Territory Young Achiever Awards at the Charles Darwin University.
Launch of the Somerville Christmas Hamper Appeal

Each year Somerville conducts a *Christmas Hamper Appeal* collecting donations of non-perishable food. The food is then packaged to make several hundred Christmas food hampers.

Hunger is largely a hidden social problem and many victims suffer in silence. Food Bank Northern Territory estimates that 1 in 10 Territorians experience food insecurity, of which half are children.

One of the biggest donors to Somerville’s *Christmas Hamper Appeal* is The Essington School community. Our staff recently attended their assembly to launch the Appeal.

We greatly appreciate the support of The Essington School in making a difference to families in need this Christmas.

*Somerville Manager Allison O’Connor talking to the Essington students about Somerville’s Christmas Hamper Appeal.*

A Christmas message from Ruth Rogerson

The end of 2015 is in sight and it is a good time to reflect on special moments that made lasting memories this year.

Such moments may include reaching a goal, the birth of a child, a wedding or as simple as encouraging words from someone special.

However, the approaching festive season can be quite stressful, especially for those experiencing grief, financial difficulties or loneliness.

Keep an eye out for those around you who may be feeling this way, as listening to their story can make a huge difference to how they feel about themselves.

Edgar Albert Guest wrote the following beautiful poem in 1898 to describe such altruism *(see right).*

Like Edgar, may your joy at Christmas be in the giving of your kind spirit.

Ruth Rogerson
*Team Well Being Counsellor*

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*At Christmas*

*by Edgar Albert Guest*

A man is at his finest towards the finish of the year;
He is almost what he should be when the Christmas season’s here;
Then he’s thinking more of others than he’s thought the months before,
And the laughter of his children is a joy worth toiling for.

He is less a selfish creature than at any other time;
When the Christmas spirit rules him he comes close to the sublime.
When its Christmas man is bigger and is better in his part;
He is keener for the service that is prompted by the heart.
All the petty thoughts and narrow seem to vanish for a while
And the true reward he’s seeking is the glory of a smile.
We need your help!

If you’re new to the Top End, you may not be aware that Somerville Community Services holds a major fundraising event in December, the Christmas Gift Wrapping Service.

Somerville will be operating at Casuarina, Palmerston, and in the City at the Mitchell Centre for the convenience of all shoppers. If you would like to help and can spare an hour or two, we would be extremely grateful.

To volunteer your time or for more information, please phone 8920 4100.

All you need to do is have fun wrapping pressies, meet other volunteers, get great gift ideas and catch up with friends who come to get their gifts wrapped.

Don’t be shy if you don’t know anyone, we’re all very friendly people and will make you feel welcome.

Casuarina Square (4-24 December)
Palmerston (4-24 December)
Mitchell Centre, Darwin (11-24 December)

Seeking donations...

UnitingCare and Target are teaming up again for the 24th year with the Gift Box Appeal, formerly Operation Santa. Target and UnitingCare are encouraging Territorians to buy gifts and make donations, to bring happiness to families who are struggling this Christmas.

An overwhelming number of families will be unable to buy Christmas gifts for their children this year.

You can make a difference by simply placing an unwrapped gift inside the large gift box located at the Palmerston or Katherine Target department store.

Alternatively, you can donate a gift card by selecting a tag from the display and nominating an amount at the Target store register.

Somerville collects the gifts and distributes them to those Territorians most in need. The Christmas Gift Box Appeal runs until 23 December.

Somerville Sunday – Uniting Church Palmerston

Partnered with the Uniting Church of Palmerston, Somerville Community Services recently coordinated the annual Somerville Sunday Service.

The service was well attended by the church congregation, Somerville staff and their families.

Somerville CEO Vicki O’Halloran AM spoke at the event, sharing the Somerville story and detailing the wide range of work undertaken by our staff.

The congregation also enjoyed a video presentation showing Somerville Staff doing what they do best – serving the community.

Somerville President Daphne Read (second from the left) with Somerville staff participating in the Bible readings during the annual Somerville Sunday Service.
National Disability Services NT hosted the Disability and Diversity Conference: Pushing the boundaries of disability support in Alice Springs in October.

The conference provided participants the opportunity to reflect on the lessons of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) trial sites. It challenged service providers to think about how to respond to the diverse choices of people with disability. Participants left the conference inspired and thinking about ways to improve service delivery and options for people with disability.

They were able to delve into topics such as: harnessing the potential of a bilingual workforce; the health and disability interface; exploring healthy relationships and reproductive health; peer support; and factors influencing Aboriginal people’s engagement in disability services. We were also impressed by presentations from SCOPE Victoria on balloon football, designed specifically for people with profound disabilities, Realising Every Dream (RED) Inc’s Brotherhood of the Blues, getting your creative groove and mojo working and Starlady, the true Queen of the Desert.

A number of speaker presentations are available on the NDS website at: www.nds.org.au/presentation/article/104.

Deborah Bampton
Service Development Manager & Administrator
Disability Services

Seniors Expo

Council on the Ageing (COTA), working in partnership with government and non-government organisations held the very first Seniors Expo in Darwin.

Somerville Community Services staff attended the Seniors Expo and manned one of 30 stalls on display and provided information to seniors on our services and programs.

The inaugural Seniors Expo provided an opportunity for elderly and retiring people to learn more about products and services available to them. Seniors now comprise around 30% of the Australian population and growing.

Staff agreed that the Expo was a success and fulfilled a very important need in our community. It is understood that organisers are considering the event again next year.

Seniors of Excellence NT Awards

Somerville vice-president Daphne Read has been presented with a 2015 Seniors of Excellence NT Award.

Seniors of Excellence NT Inc is a community Not for Profit organisation which recognises and celebrates the voluntary contributions of people aged over 65 years within our Northern Territory community.

Daphne was one of 11 amazing people who have served the community in so many ways, often for many years, as ‘quiet achievers.’ Congratulations Daphne and to the other ten recipients.

The inaugural Seniors Expo provided an opportunity for elderly and retiring people to learn more about products and services available to them. Seniors now comprise around 30% of the Australian population and growing.

Above L-R: Somerville CEO Vicki O’Halloran with Daphne Read receiving her Seniors of Excellence Award from the Minister for Senior Territorians, The Honorable Peter Styles MLA.
Making the news this quarter...

Somerville welcomes local Member for Wanguri

Long-time supporter of Somerville, and local parliamentary member for Wanguri, Nicole Manison MLA, called in and spent some time with Somerville Management and Staff.

Nicole addressed the staff and thanked them for all their good work and dedication. Nicole then toured our Wagaman facilities.

Ombudsman’s Office visits Somerville

The Ombudsman investigates and resolves complaints about NT Government agencies, local government councils and Police conduct.


Tax Help – Australian Taxation Officer visits Somerville

Somerville was once again involved in the annual Tax Help program.

Our ATO-trained and accredited staff assist low income earners to complete and lodge their tax returns.

Through our free Tax Help Program, our Financial Services team assisted over 240 people to complete their tax returns.

Nicole Manison MLA on her recent visit to Somerville (L-R: Managers Josie Bacus, Allison O’Connor, Liza Metcalfe with Nicole Manison and CEO Vicki O’Halloran AM).

ATO Tax Help Director Vic Mazzone visited Somerville to discuss the Tax Help Program. Seen here with Somerville Manager Allison O’Connor.

Dez Wilde from the NT Ombudsman’s Office recently visited Somerville and provided a presentation to the Management team on the role and function of the NT Ombudsman’s Office (L-R: Skye Lee, Deborah Bampton, Kerrie Boswell, Allison O’Connor, Dez Wilde, Liza Metcalfe, Bonnie Sally and CEO Vicki O’Halloran AM).
Staff Profile – Vicki Borzi

Hi to you all, my name is Vicki Borzi.

I was born in a small town called Hokitika on the West Coast of the South Island of New Zealand. I lived in an even smaller town further south of Hokitika called Ross with a population of around 500. I had a fabulous childhood in Ross. We were free to roam and most weekends we were either romping around the bush making slides out of what was available or swimming in the local rivers. We would bike for miles either side of the town. As kids we entertained ourselves outside and our parents encouraged us to be outside during daylight hours.

Television came much later to the coast and only transmitted from 5-10pm. It was not part of our lives - until Star Trek began - which I loved then and still do.

In my 20s I moved to Brisbane looking for a better life and more opportunities. I worked really hard at two jobs so I could afford to live well and further explore Queensland. I spent six months travelling through North Queensland to Cape Tribulation with a friend. It was an amazing experience, camping on the beaches and among the rainforest. Eventually I returned to Brisbane and returned to work again.

A few years down the track I met my wonderful husband Mike, who I call Borzi. We married and have two boys now aged 23 and 29. Mike and I have travelled most of Australia, and came to Darwin 28 years ago looking for work. We experienced a really rough patch and thought relocating might give us a new beginning, which it did. Both of our boys thrived here and Borzi and I have always found work.

I began at Somerville nearly three years ago. I noticed ads for Financial Counselling on the Wagaman notice board and thought it sounded interesting and challenging. Borzi and I had experienced financial ups and downs but had managed to work through them together. We budgeted and prioritised and the boys always came first.

I was absolutely thrilled when I got the job and was given the opportunity to change direction. Somerville has given me the opportunity to obtain my Diploma in Financial Counselling and other units of study to enhance my financial counselling skills. I love my job with Somerville and I thoroughly enjoy passing on my skills to clients. I love empowering them with information and options to enable them to make better choices for themselves and their families in the future. I hope to keep growing my skills and continue working for Somerville.

Vicki Borzi
Financial Counsellor