



# Annual Report

2013

# Contents

<b>1. The Bower Board of Directors</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Chairperson's Report</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Treasurer's Report</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Board Details</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. Co-operative Manager's Report</b>		<b>6</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Co-op Manager's Note</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Staff &amp; Volunteers</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Sales</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>3. Auditor's Financial Report</b>		

Hard copy only. See separate PDF on website

[http://www.bower.org.au/images/bower\\_audit\\_fin\\_report\\_2013.pdf](http://www.bower.org.au/images/bower_audit_fin_report_2013.pdf)

## 1. The Bower Board of Directors

### 1.1 Chairperson's Report

Hello and welcome to all members and supporters of the Bower Cooperative.

The year has been one of many transitions, with associated challenges. Change is a constant in organised groups and community-based organisations will always have their fair share. Some of the origins of this year's changes lie in the experience of perennial challenges and key questions such as – What sort of organisation do its people want the Bower to be? How do we absorb and develop new ideas? How do we deal with the many facets of our people? What sort of systems? These have, do and will continue to take a lot of time and effort.

What I'd like to do in reporting to you now as a meeting of members, is to give some picture of how this year has been in a range of areas, and how vital it remains for everyone, not only now but generally, to keep as strong as possible a focus on constructive, clear collaboration and co-operation, to join each other in supporting the Bower and its management team with the aim to allocate resources and efforts positively. Co-operative means working together.

This has without doubt been a tough and developmental year. It has been tough, sometimes difficult, and often demanding on the Bower as an entity, on Bower staff and board, and also even on members; it has also however been a year of transition and development.

The year to date began with the AGM that took place in December. The timing of this meeting was set in part because of difficulty in finalising the accounts, through no fault of the directors.

I'd like to acknowledge and thank the interest and effort that has been shown by a range of members, by staff and by Board members past and present in support of the Bower. It is through sharing constructively and taking on the best of ideas that the Bower can develop and grow.

Fifteen Board meetings have taken place in the ten months since the December AGM. This does not include the additional meetings and time that have been necessary to cover needs as they have arisen. The time and work involved in this can be quite substantial when it is appreciated that Board members are unpaid volunteers giving of their time in addition to employment and family commitments. As you will see from the Manager's report, this time has been given willingly to try to support the needs at the time. At all times careful consideration has been given with the aim of outcomes that can provide lasting value, rather than quick fixes. Areas of significant effort and activity have included:

- **ETHICAL FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT:** A comprehensive review was undertaken of the values and principles to support the Bower and its people, leading to the completion of the development of the Ethics Framework initiated by the previous Board in collaboration with Dr Peter Melser; this is intended as a living document to cover all facets of the Co-operative and its people, and is presented for ratification by members at this General Meeting.
- **OPEN DISCLOSURE OF BOARD MINUTES:** As had become clear over time, opening up communication as far as possible was seen as a necessary part of Bower processes. Accordingly Board meeting minutes are now publicly available on the website as well as at the shop on request. We do try to keep them coming as quickly as possible subject to real time constraints. As they are going online they are of course reviewed as they can be then seen all over the world by anyone with an internet connection, but they are appropriate records of what is trans-

acted and effected at the meetings and no, there are no secret copies or conspiracies, just a legitimate report to members.

- **EMPLOYEE DIRECTOR PROTOCOL:** To help improve communications a protocol was developed for a staff board member which was part of the initial Bower Rules.
- **WORKING GROUPS:** As stated at the AGM, one means of engagement of member energy and input into the future of the Bower was identified via Working Groups. Significant work was involved in preparing Terms of Reference for the Working Groups which covered:
  - Systems Integration: IT and finance;
  - Membership, Communication and Engagement;
  - Bower operations and resourcing;
  - WHS – sustaining a healthy work environment

An initial joint meeting was held after three months, followed by a number of meetings which were held by the groups including WHS, and while not currently active any or all have the potential to be reactivated in line with the identified needs.

- **MANAGER RECRUITMENT:** Your board put a lot of effort into reviewing the parameters of the role of the Manager to be able to recruit most effectively now and into the future. After the Bower had had several managers in the space of a year, and with stability a clear problem, the Board put a comprehensively worked recruitment strategy in place to secure a full time manager with the skill and experience to take the Bower forward. We undertook an exhaustive review looking at the recent history of the manager situation at the Bower, duties, stability and viability and we took the decision to make it a full time position with some amendments to the position description and a change to the title to reflect the role. As well as this, a recruitment committee including an independent specialist conducted numerous interviews, including one by Skype to the USA, leading to final shortlisting and the successful recruitment of Guido Verbist as full time Co-operative Manager to lead the Bower team. The value of this is already being seen and demonstrated, and we commend to you Guido's report. We also commend the steadfast willingness and professional dependability, eye for detail and integrity of Steve Clarke as the Acting Manager before Guido's appointment; Steve of course continues as a valued member of the team in his Business Development role.
- **FEEDBACK PROTOCOL:** Established a protocol to receive feedback/complaints via a website pro-forma addressed to the Staff and Member Co-ordinator in the first instance.
- **MEMBER ATTENDANCES:** Invited members to observe board meetings to promote awareness and transparency.
- **DELEGATIONS:** Confirmed delegations for Staff and Member Co-ordinator and Co-operative Manager to deal with staff matters and respond to correspondence.
- **BOOKKEEPING:** Financial and business systems have remained a perennial problem for not just the current but also previous boards. To address the bookkeeping requirements a professional accountant, David Mansfield of Abacus Bookkeeping, was hired from mid-May to sort and get on top of the Bower's financial systems. David delivered financial updates from July and this assistance has helped immensely to improve our systems (which remain a work in progress) and to pass the 2012/13 audit to the requirements of the Bower's auditor.
- **CONCERNS:** In June the Board met with a delegation of members with concerns. This was a constructive meeting; everyone involved acted responsibly, constructively without rancour and

insightfully to address issues of concern particularly in relation to finance and recruitment which by the time of the meeting was well advanced as were steps to address financial weaknesses - refer to June 18 Minutes for more. This meeting demonstrated the value of sharing issues and concerns constructively in support of the Bower.

- **MEMBERSHIP:** Bower active membership rules clarified – membership form and info changed to reflect this.
- **AUTHORITIES:** New delegated account authorities ratified for auditor and management.
- **AFFILIATIONS:** 107 Redfern Street workshop lease renewed.

## Conclusion

As I said to you in my remarks at the beginning, this has been a year of transition and development. The Bower now needs women and men with not only passion and commitment, but also the expertise and the time to give it and share it to support the Co-operative and its governance. We welcome the nominees who are willing to stand as member directors and wish everyone well individually and for the Bower. In relation to this it is worth it for everyone to review, whether as office bearers, staff, members or as stakeholders generally, some of the principles involved in addition to the Co-operative's own Ethical Framework. Per the Department of Fair Trading's website, Co-operatives registered under the *Co-operatives Act 1992* subscribe to the international principles of co-operation. The principles act as guidelines ensuring the organisation remains in the control of members and operates for their benefit.

The principles are:

**1: Voluntary and open membership:** Co-operatives are voluntary organisations, open to all who are able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without discrimination.

**2: Democratic member control:** Co-operatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in the setting of policies and decision-making. Members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote).

**3: Member economic participation:** Members contribute equally to the funds of the co-operative and control the allocation of surplus funds.

**4: Autonomy and independence:** Co-operatives are independent organisations controlled by their members. Any agreements entered into with other organisations must ensure democratic control by members and the co-operatives independence.

**5: Education, training and information:** Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operative. They inform the general public about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

**6: Co-operation among co-operatives:** Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together.

**7: Concern for community:** Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

## **Board Director responsibility and resourcing**

It is well recognised that there are responsibilities with being a Director and these responsibilities also need to be supported structurally by the Bower if there is to be common understanding and general upskilling. Accordingly I note two proposals to back board members and back the Bower for the future:

### **I: BOARD RESOURCES:**

A complete review of the resources supplied to incoming and serving board members to include common key reference information in a standardised format subject to periodic amendment as required by the board. It is important to have available for all incoming board members standardised reference resources that contain key info, can be updated periodically and reduce reliance on key individuals. Suggested section headings for board resource folders are as follows, to include but not limited to the following key items:

#### **A. OPERATING ENVIRONMENT**

- Business and official forms / Co-operatives/ Fair Trading information
- The Bower Co-operative: a. People and Purpose; b. Function, Facets, Future
- Bower Board profile summary and orientation introduction document
- Board role and Governance responsibilities (general information)
- Bower Rules and Summary (plain English)
- Reference to key legislation
- Ethical Framework
- Organisation Structure
- Bower Affiliations – Men’s Shed, 107 Redfern St. etc.

#### **B. FINANCE**

- Financial Documents
- Revenue and Expenditure overview
- Financial Delegations
- Financial Reporting – Requirements & Timeframes
- Annual Financial Report

#### **C. MONTHLY REPORTS**

- Board meeting summary (dates) and attendance register (Matrix)
- Declarations of interest
- Monthly minutes
- Feedback Register and Copy of Complaints/ Compliments Form

## D. APPENDICES

- Risk register and action plans
  - WHS
  - Operational & Strategic Risks
  - Quality Plan
- Communication Policy including complaints
- Copy of Bower Webpage
- Copy of Bower Newsletter

## II: BOARD TRAINING

The Australian Scholarships Foundation (ASF) offers scholarships to Not For Profit office bearers via the Australian Institute of Companies. This is a great opportunity that should be pursued by board members to support them in their responsibilities. Closing date for the next round of courses in February is October 27<sup>th</sup>. I urge all members of the incoming board to pursue this.

In relation to Resources, outgoing Independent Director Oliver Bradshaw has indicated his willingness to assist the incoming board with his expertise. Oliver deserves special mention - as a waste industry professional, he has given selflessly of himself over two terms totalling four years and deserves the gratitude of the Bower community for his sustained commitment to integrity, to the Bower and for the many contributions he has made.

It has been a year which has had many demands, a year of transitions, sometimes not as smoothly or as quickly as we would have wished, but everyone has played their part in various ways to build a solid base for the future. Part of our commitment has been to pursue systems, process, openness in meetings and in minutes in a way not previously seen, a comprehensive and systematic approach to bring in an experienced manager with the vision, background to consolidate and grow the best ideas for the Bower's future, supported by better systems, and action to address the primary systems issue in financial records.

There is much still to be done, but the Bower is at the threshold of great potential and promise if good people can come together in a positive way to build on the experience to date. This is already happening. There will be no place in the future for action outside the Bower's Ethical Framework, but an open and collaborative approach that recognises that while we may not always agree, in fact may disagree, that we can nevertheless and knowing this, still act co-operatively within this Co-operative which is dear to everyone in order to effectively support it, its activities and everyone in it.

I look forward to all of us working together to do just that.

Best wishes,

Robin Mead  
Chair

## 1.2 Treasurer's Report 2012-2013

Dear members of The Bower

I am writing as interim Acting Treasurer. Last year's Treasurer, David Harris, did not want to stand for the position at the first board meeting after last year's AGM. He expected that illnesses in his family would take much of his time, but was persuaded by the board to continue a watching brief on the position. He formally resigned as Treasurer in June 2013.

This overview explains some of the context for the financial report 2012-2013 which has been uploaded separately on the website and will be available in hard copy for your review at the Annual General Meeting.

Last year's Treasurer's Report described some systems and management shortcomings at The Bower, due to an "expertise gap". We have continued to work on closing this gap.

Our priorities for 2012/13 were to invest in operational and management support for the long-term benefit of The Bower. This meant investing in upgrading the financial management system, employing a full time manager and completing the Ethics Framework which was initiated by the previous board.

Over the last two years the board had been made aware that the bookkeeping function was not as efficient nor effective as it could be: difficult to manage, unnecessary delays, potential inaccuracies. The submission of BAS statements was also delayed which incurred two fines this year. The current board engaged a professional accountant to fix the errors and improve the systems to ensure a solid foundation for the future financial management and accountability of The Bower.

Bookkeeping shortcomings also had implications for our annual audit. For the past few years it has taken longer and thus cost more. The investment made in this year should reap future savings as future audits will be easier to complete.

The 2011 Treasurer's report highlighted that staff annual leave should not be held over where possible as it has adverse financial implications for the organisation. It is a risk for the Bower to hold over staff annual leave for two reasons:

1. accrued leave results in increased liabilities and increased risk
2. staff may become more stressed and tired without taking their regular leave.

Currently for various reasons including limits on staff resources, some employees have accrued more than 4 weeks leave. The board decided to allow for extra funds in the budget for this year to cover costs for replacement staff when others take their leave. This decision means that leave payments have substantially increased this year.

Other increased costs included the investment in the Ethics Framework which was an initiative of the previous board and completed in 2013. Electricity charges also increased consistent with general price rises.

In 2013 the board decision to increase the Co-operative Manager position to a full time role with a higher hourly rate will increase Bower staff overheads in 2013/14 and beyond. Guido Verbist has prepared a Financial Action Plan to generate the necessary income to cover these projected additional costs. The Financial Action Plan identifies increasing revenue through additional Council recruitment to the Reuse Referral Service and an increase of grant income as a set target for the Business Development Manager.

Despite all these additional expenses and restructures, the 2012/13 financial year concluded with a loss of only \$4,000. Financially, we are now in a much more organised and accountable position than the start of the year.

I will be on hand at the AGM and able to discuss any issues you may have with this report.

Cheers  
Amanda Buckland

### 1.3 Board Details

The Bower Board of Directors is elected by the membership to oversee the future direction of The Bower Reuse & Repair Centre. The board is formed by five member directors and two independent directors, with each director serving a two year term.

Directors are not paid, they give their time and effort throughout their elected term because they believe wholeheartedly in the aims and objectives of The Bower and wish to contribute to the development of the organisation. Thank you to the board for its ongoing work and support.

Directors in office during the Financial Year 2012/13 and up to the date of this report:

Director	Started	Ceased
Adelaide Amy	20/11/10	08/12/12
John Bartholomew	26/10/08	08/12/12
Oliver Bradshaw	03/11/11	
Amanda Buckland	03/11/11	
Margaret Carey	26/10/08	08/12/12
Bruce Diekman	08/12/12	
David Harris	24/10/09	
Thuy Le	08/12/12	
Robin Mead	08/12/12	
Neil Rahman <i>(Deputised by Wolfgang Spranz)</i>	08/12/12	27/9/13
John Samuel	20/11/10	08/12/12
Wolfgang Spranz <i>(Deputy for Neil Rahman)</i>	12/03/13	27/9/13

There were 15 board meetings held from the AGM on 8 December 2012 up to this year's AGM on 19 October, 2013:

Director	Status	Office	Meetings Attended
Oliver Bradshaw	Independent		13
Amanda Buckland	Member	Secretary, A' Treasurer	11
Bruce Diekman	Member	A'g Secretary	15
David Harris	Member	Treasurer	15
Thuy Le	Employee		12
Robin Mead	Member	Chair	15
Neil Rahman	Member		5 (to 19/2/13)
Wolfgang Spranz	Member ( <i>Deputy for Neil Rahman</i> )		6 (from 12/3/13 to 27/9/13)

## 2. The Co-operative Manager's Report

### 2.1 Letter from the Co-operative Manager

I started in my role as Co-operative manager at the beginning of the 2013-2014 financial year which makes it difficult for me to reflect on last year's work and results.

That said I believe it is fair to say that the 2012-2013 financial year was a transition year with a happy ending. It was a transition year in many different ways.

Four General Managers helped keep the Bower 'sailing' over this transition period: **David Harris** (in a volunteer capacity), followed by **Casey Becker** (Sept – Nov 12), followed by **Mary Pianka** up to last year's AGM, followed by **Steve Clarke** (Dec 12 – Aug 13).

Some new staff, who brought a variety of skills and experience with them, joined The Bower but sadly we also had to say goodbye to some. Please see the staff and volunteer chapter for a presentation of all staff.

Two processes in 2012–2013 have assisted to guide the Bower's strategic direction and governance.

In September 2012 a membership survey was conducted which led to the development of a **strategy paper**. The full strategy paper which was presented at the AGM last December, set some ambitious targets for 2017:

- \* Income from Bower shop of \$400,000
- \* Waste diversion of 25,000m3 per annum
- \* Grants (including RRS participation by Councils) \$75,000
- \* 6 workshops per annum to upskill participants and raise awareness
- \* 4 community partnerships to raise awareness and expand networks

We have now commenced the job of working out how to develop the 'business' to achieve these ambitious targets. For an example in the shop, we have extended our opening hours and created some more shop floor space by rearranging the eco-library. You might also have noticed some positive changes to the way we 'present' our eclectic range of goods.

We have also been working to expand and improve our Reuse Referral Service, and increase the level of support provided by local councils.

The board and staff, with the assistance of the St James Ethics Centre, also embarked on an ambitious process to produce an Ethics Framework for The Bower, which you can find in this report under the membership chapter. It was an excellent exercise bringing all the great ideas and minds of The Bower together and translating them into objectives, values, principles and importantly in a set of policies and practices. What better introduction can a new incoming manager hope for?

This brings me to another important transition, namely the appointment of a Business Development Manager, an Accountant and a Co-operative Manager in addition to the existing positions of a Staff and Membership Co-ordinator and Reuse and Referral Officer. This will undoubtedly put The Bower in a much stronger position to further grow and modernise its operations but it also brings the need to be cautious, thorough and measured with our financial management.

As you can see in the financial report this transition year has led to a flattening in the sales and growth of The Bower which shouldn't come as a surprise, considering all the changes that took place. The good thing is that we still have a healthy financial situation and are ready to turn the trend and get The Bower growing strongly again. The results for the first quarter of this financial year are promising in that regard.

Finally I believe that last year has also been a year of reflection, discussion and building bridges, respect and understanding for the different opinions and ideas that live amongst the membership. The co-operative The Bower was, is and will remain a place where new ideas are embraced, where local groups find a home and where new initiatives to give back to the community will triumph.

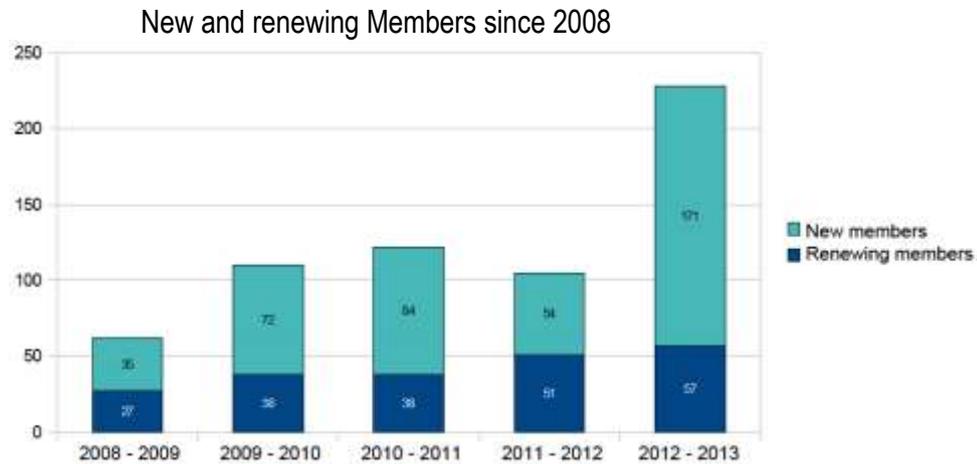
2013-2014 looks to me like a new start, with a newly recruited bunch of motivated staff, with a united membership, with an upgraded management structure and with plenty of ideas and plans to take The Bower to the next level.

It will be an honour to serve you and I thank you for your ongoing support on behalf of The Bower Team.

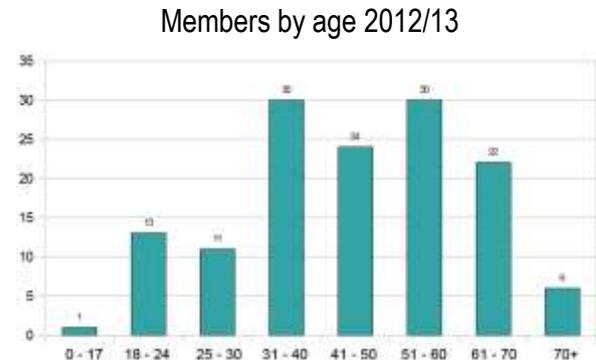
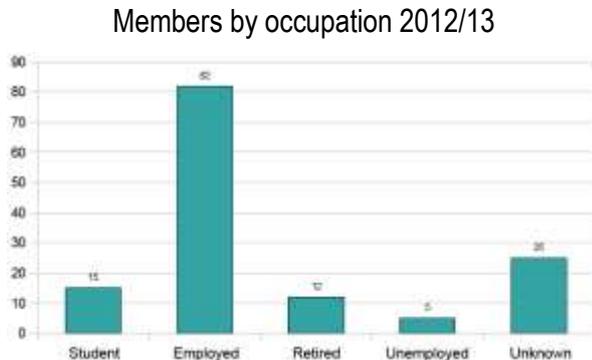
Guido Verbist  
Co-operative Manager

## 2.2 Members

Our Co-operative membership base has continued to grow rapidly in 2012/13, numbers have increased by 54% in the past financial year, with a sharp increase in new applications which looks like it will continue into 2013/14. The number of renewing members remained more constant, comprising approximately one quarter of the total membership.

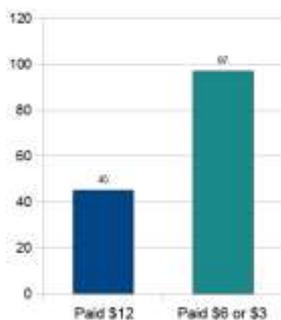


Over a third of members come from the Inner West region of Sydney, however we are seeing an increase in members joining and regularly visiting from the Eastern and Northern suburbs of Sydney, and returning from as faraway as Canberra and Melbourne.



Looking to the future The Bower wants to continue to minimise the administration and cost burdens associated with processing members, as the chart below shows the majority of members paid either \$6 or \$3 because they held a concession card or joined up after January 1. We hope to undertake an analysis in 2013/14 to find out how to improve this situation and what needs to be adjusted.

### Membership fees paid 2012/13



## **2.3 Staff & Volunteers**

Our current team are a varied group of enthusiastic and ethical people. While some of us are new additions, we all work together for the good of The Bower.

We have a loyal base of volunteers, some who come in daily, some who pop in every time they're passing by. Each volunteer has their own passions, interests, and talents, and we do well to utilise those for the good of The Bower. We like our volunteers and staff to feel happy and enthusiastic about our Co-operative aims, and being sympathetic to their interests is a big part of that.

The Bower also supports several community employment schemes such as:

- Work for the Dole
- Salvation Army Employment Plus
- MTC Work Solutions
- Corrective Services New South Wales
- Mission Australia

Some of the participants in these schemes have gone on to become members and volunteers, and being at The Bower has been a positive, sometimes life changing experience for these people.

In the past financial year ending 30 June 2012 we had at least 35 volunteers, not to forget our 7 Board members who give freely of their time and expertise to keep the Bower running and working according to the membership rules and expectations.

The Bower continues to exist by the force of membership, volunteers and staff, ongoing interest in and pursuit of its aims and objectives, and by keeping a flow of communication open between all stakeholders.

### **List of 2013 Staff:**

#### **Casual and payroll**

Fiona Arnold

Thuy Le

Zac DeSilva

Luke Ward

Glen Lambert

Greg Nabke

Sam Worrad

Richard Stansfield

Steve Clarke

#### **Regular Sub-contractors:**

Michael Greensmith (Men's Shed)

Shirley Arends (Book-keeper)

David Mansfield (Accountant)

### **New faces**

Over the last two months The Bower has recruited no less than 5 new people. The team and the board are excited about the wealth of experience and skills that the newly recruited staff members bring with them.

### **Steve Dale**

Steve worked as a truck driver and cowboy in the Northern Territory before moving to Sydney to work in the antiques and vintage store *Drunk on the Moon* in Newtown. He joins our sales team, will be our back-up truck driver, and being a handyman, he has a keen interest in restoration of goods and becoming a consignee.

### **Christine Smith**

Smith, as she wants to be called, worked for more than 20 years in the Taronga and Western Plain Zoos as Work Health and Safety Manager. The globetrotter virus took her to Asia, Europe, Latin America and South Africa. She nominates as a highlight a one-on-one 80 minute guided tour with Nelson Mandela at Taronga Zoo. She works as salesperson and is also active as a consignee.

### **Jennifer Newman**

Jen recently moved to Sydney from Perth where she studied sustainable development at the Murdoch University. She also managed waste reduction and carbon neutral programs for the YMCA childcare centres and was workshop coordinator for a taxi company. She also joins the sales team. In her free time she is working on an "open shed" project to repair goods for The Bower.

### **Guido Verbist**

Guido started in August as Co-operative Manager. He brings many years of management experience in both the not-for-profit and commercial sector, and has expertise in campaigning, public engagement and project management including with Greenpeace International as head of the operations department. Before that he was founding director of a recycling centre in his native Belgium in partnership with local government authorities.

### **David Mansfield**

David is our in-house accountant. He (or one of his team) comes in one day a week to process the payments and to do the much needed improvements to the financial management system.



Steve Dale

Christine Smith

Jennifer Newman

Guido Verbist

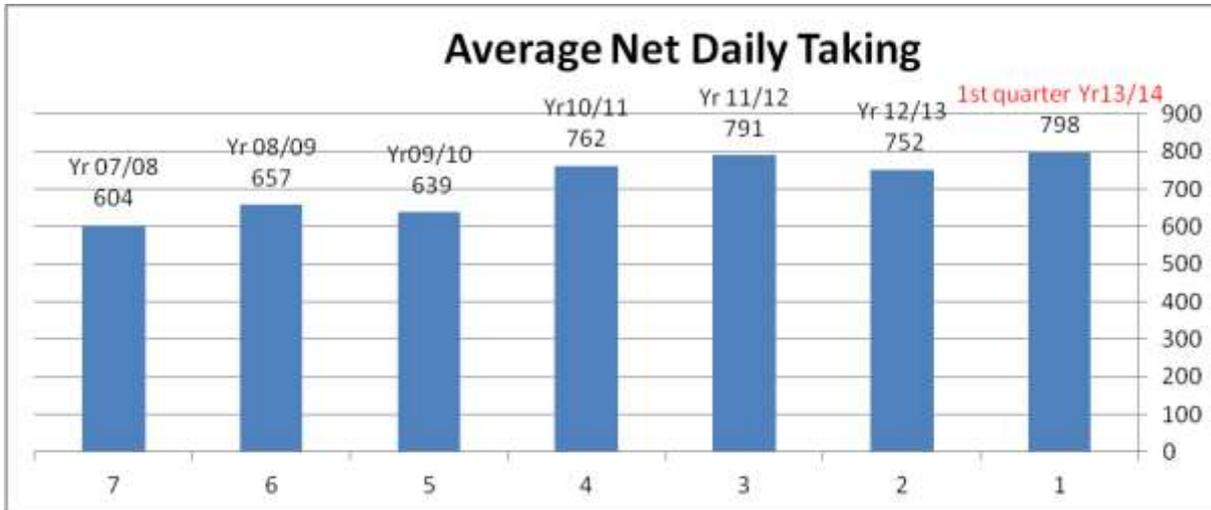
David Mansfield

Sadly we also had to say goodbye to four colleagues in recent months.

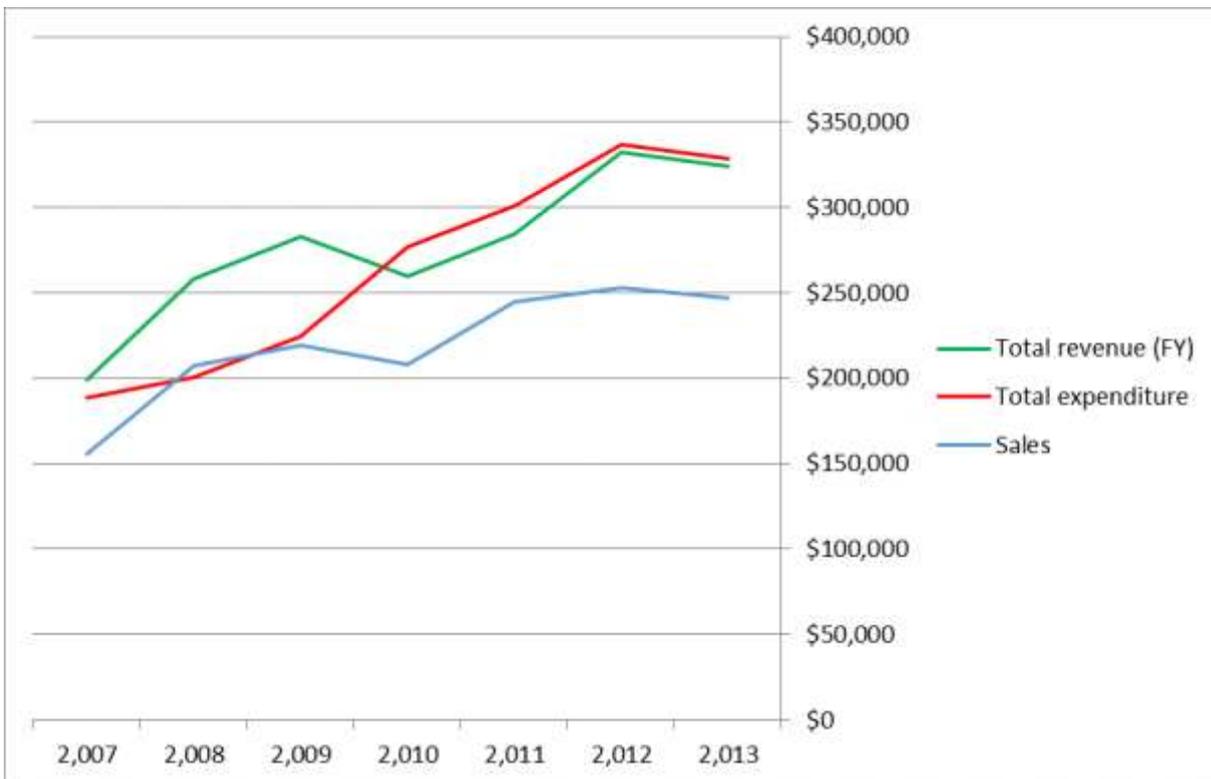
- At the end of July Luke Ward could no longer resist the call to travel overseas.
- In October Thuy Le did her last shift after she also decided that it was time to move on and explore new horizons. She will move to Germany in March to continue her studies in Stuttgart.
- And, after more than 7 years of dedication and commitment to the Bower, Richard Stansfield has announced his departure in the coming weeks. He will be missed and we wish him good luck with his new endeavours.
- Sadly we also had to say goodbye to board director Neil Rahman. He passed away on Friday the 27<sup>th</sup> of September after a short battle with cancer.

## 2.4 Sales

The average net daily taking for last year was \$752. As the graphic below shows this was less than the previous two years but the good thing is that we have been able to turn this around in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the current financial year where we generated an average daily taking of \$798.



The graphic below shows that total revenue and sales were down by +/- 2% last year. Total expenditure was also down by a similar amount helping keep the loss to a minimum.



FY	TTL REVENUE	TTL EXPENDITURE	TTL SALES	Revenue % growth	Expenditure % growth	Sales % growth
2013	\$ 324,438	\$ 328,466	\$ 247,168	-2%	-3%	-2%
2012	\$ 332,148	\$ 337,190	\$ 253,122	17%	12%	3%
2011	\$ 284,562	\$ 300,771	\$ 244,731	9%	8%	17%
2010	\$ 259,877	\$ 277,255	\$ 208,308	-8%	23%	-5%
2009	\$ 282,701	\$ 224,806	\$ 219,212	9%	12%	6%
2008	\$ 258,553	\$ 200,758	\$ 207,452	30%	6%	33%
2007	\$ 199,266	\$ 188,934	\$ 155,792	11.4%	12.4%	11.0%

\* 2012 Expenditure excludes a one-off write-off of The Bower building.  
The 2012 sales figure is from the 2013 P&L comparison - a small variance from the sales figure

## 2.5 Reuse Referral Service

In 2006 The Bower implemented a unique **Reuse Referral Service**. This service offers **free assistance to residents and businesses of metropolitan Sydney** to find appropriate reuse/repair/recycling enterprises to dispose of their unwanted goods in an environmentally responsible manner.

Callers with items The Bower is unable to accept directly are referred to at least one, and usually three or more, organisations or enterprises which will repair, reuse or recycle each item.

Referrals are offered based on location, preferred use, state of the goods, and special circumstances.

- In 2012/2013, 4,429.53 m3 of kerbside waste was diverted from landfill through the Reuse Referral Service. This equates to about 150 garbage truck loads of waste across Sydney in 1 year alone.
- In 2012/2013 the Reuse Referral Service provided 9,084 referrals which support second-hand, repair & recycling businesses or charities across Sydney.

Our Reuse Referral Customer Liaison Officer works 32.5 hours a week and is directly responsible for management, promotion, and the ultimate success of this service. Retaining this position is essential to ensure the free service is accessible and current - a combination of qualities difficult to achieve through solely web based services.

Our Reuse Referral Database contains contact details for **more than 1,000 businesses, charities and community organisations across Sydney** who deal in second hand goods and repair and recycling services.

The Bower Reuse Referral Services benefits local councils by:

- Increasing sustainable waste disposal services to residents without added council responsibility for day-to-day management
- Promotion of reuse and recycling in local communities
- Promotion of local businesses, charities and organisations with a focus on sustainability.

The Bower provides the service to the public for free. Without external financial support and promotion

in kind, The Bower would need to greatly reduce the level of assistance offered to current callers, as it would divert time that could be used for other work that helps sustain our operations.

To date this service has focused on regions where it has received financial and in-kind promotional support from councils - predominantly the Eastern, Southern and Inner West regions of Sydney.

**The table below shows the service provided by the Bower Reuse Referral Service per metropolitan council in FY 2012/2013 and the financial contribution we are requesting from each municipality in FY 2013/2014.**

City Council	Callers in 2012-2013	M3 Diverted in 2012-2013	Requested Contribution in 2013-2014
Ashfield	155	245.3	3500
Auburn	9	23.9	2250
Botany Bay	22	43.2	2250
Burwood	14	23.98	2250
Canterbury	133	202.83	3500*
Canada Bay	163	295.43	3500*
Hurstville	33	75.73	2250
Kogarah	69	155.64	3500
Leichhardt	247	323.87	4750*
Marrickville	1185	1129.35	4750*
Randwick	122	225.28	3500
Rockdale	55	96.1	3500*
Ryde	49	118.48	3500
City of Sydney	405	822.27	4750*
Sutherland	30	60.83	2250
Waverley	65	120.02	3500
Woollahra	50	83.14	3500*
Other	222	384.18	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3028</b>	<b>4429</b>	<b>\$57,000</b>

\* Indicates those Councils who have actively contributed to the RRS in 2012-2013, both financially and with promotion in kind through web, phone and flier distribution

## Reuse Referral Service Statistics

### Caller/donor key statistics

Total callers/donors for 2012-13	<b>3028</b>
Average monthly call rate	<b>252</b>
Total Collections calls for 2012-13	<b>1628</b>
Total Referrals calls for 2012-13	<b>1283</b>
Total waste diversion for 2012-13	<b>4429 m3</b>
Total waste diversion per month	<b>369 m3</b>
Total waste diversion per person	<b>1.46 m3</b>



## Caller/donor key statistics for financial year 2012-2013

### Total callers by month

Month	callers
July	283
Aug	242
Sept	250
Oct	235
Nov	276
Dec	153*
Jan	316
Feb	203
March	277
April	251**
May	296
June	246
<b>TOTAL CALLERS</b>	<b>3028</b>

\*Closed over Christmas \*\*Closed over Easter

### Resource Category per caller

Resource category	total
Auto	20
Books	120
Bric-a-brac	388
Building materials	391
Clothing	31
Computers etc.	136
Electrical	417
Furniture	1362
Music instr.	20
Paper/cardboard	3
Recreation	435
Tools/Hardware	198
Waste	16
White-goods	200

### Total caller types

Type	total
Education	5
Federal Government	1
Individuals	2928
LGA (council)	5
NGO	1
Not-for-Profit	7
Private Business	78
State Government	1

### Point of reference for callers

ess/reference	total
Current customer	2606
Council notice	370
Website	30
Friend	15
Other organisation	1
Radio	0
Member	5
Yellow pages	0
Unknown	1

some people donated items from more than one category

## The Bower Ethics Framework

The Bower Ethics Framework consists of four levels:

- Objectives:** The Bower purpose – what it seeks to achieve
- Values:** The organisation character the Bower seeks to have
- Principles:** The general guiding principles it holds to get there
- Practices:** The policies and everyday operational practices it operates with, creating the experience people have of the Bower

The Framework has been developed through a facilitated dialogue among its members, staff and Board. This dialogue is a model of the ongoing ethical conversation the Bower will maintain to remain an ethically guided organisation. The key to this ongoing dialogue is the continuous review, discussion and improvement of operational practices to ensure that they continue to reflect the Bower values and principles.

**Objectives:** The Bower Purposes are:

- Reducing the amount of 'hard waste' going to landfill
- Raising awareness of the value of waste reduction
- Generating employment opportunities and skills training in the community
- Providing affordable goods sourced from the waste stream to low income earners and other disadvantaged groups in the community
- Encouraging community awareness of environmentally responsible design and manufacture
- Advocating for long life design, repairable products and the use of sustainable, recyclable materials for appliances and furnishings
- Providing benefits to the community via these objectives
- Involving the community in the development and achievement of these objectives

**Values:** The Bower is a co-operative with:

- An inclusive, active-engagement culture in which people are respected for who they are and acknowledged for what they do
- Shared stewardship in promoting sustainability through creative re-use of unwanted material and hard waste
- Community awareness and sensitivity to society's material waste
- Staff fulfilment in meeting customers' needs

**Principles:** The Bower realises these purposes and values through:

- Transparency through proactive and open communication to ensure accountability and trust
- Being accessible and responsive to Bower members and staff, the community and project partners
- Inviting active participation and encouraging dialogue (around Bower objectives and operations)

- Actively sharing skills, knowledge and relevant resources with one another and the community
- Adopting clear and consistent policies to ensure fairness to staff and a dependable service to the community
- Maintaining an agile and responsive organisation structure which enables efficient operation and co-ordination
- Giving the attention required to customers to have their needs met
- Creating new opportunities for educating people about re-use of unwanted material

**Organisation Practices:** the Bower implements this ethical framework through the following practices and policies

Practices	Values and Principles served
1. Maintain simple, accessible and responsive communication, information technology and social media systems for all areas of information	Inclusion, transparency Open communication Accountability, efficiency
2. Place all policies, job descriptions and Board minutes on-line on the Bower website	Transparency Inclusion, communication
3. Create an easily accessible on-line dialogue space to report and discuss emerging issues and ideas, including working group reports and discussion	Communication dialogue Listening Creative exploration Shared stewardship
4. Post all Board agendas and notice of other current issues on-line to enable member contribution to these discussions	Inclusion, participation Transparency, communication, dialogue
5. Adopt a decision-making model of short-term working groups (comprised of staff, Board and members) to address key issues and advise the Board	Inclusion, participation Devolved decision-making Shared stewardship, Shared Knowledge, resources Responsive listening Agile, creative
6. Appoint a person as convenor (contact person) of each working group and any issue area of focus, responsible for timely action, communication and facilitation of group process, responsible to the Manager and Board	Communication Coordination, accountability listening

<p>7. Design job roles and assign tasks on a flexible basis, responsive to member concerns, Board decisions and staff interest</p>	<p>Flexibility Responsiveness Inclusion Efficiency</p>
<p>8. Encourage open, more personal relationships, based on the shared commitments of the Co-operative, to enable reflective and affirming relationships with one another</p> <p><i>(Unspoken resentments, gossip, and exclusive cliques which interfere with openness and inclusion are actively discouraged)</i></p>	<p>Respect, acknowledgement Shared stewardship Responsibility Trust</p>
<p>9. Deal with relationship issues and conflicts promptly and in person with the assistance of an in-house mediator (nominated) as required, to develop solutions and new learning rather than assigning blame</p>	<p>Respect, Inclusion Responsibility Fairness Dialogue</p>
<p>10. Devise an appropriate balance of disclosure of organisation matters and confidentiality of personal information</p>	<p>Transparency Respect Confidentiality</p>
<p>11. Daily contact by Manager (10 minutes or so) with all rostered employees (to identify new initiatives and issues of concern)</p>	<p>Listening, responsiveness Dialogue Acknowledgement</p>
<p>12. Regular staff meetings to discuss staff and wider Bower issues and formulate improvements to practices and new initiatives</p>	<p>Dialogue, creativity Responsive listening Responsibility Shared stewardship</p>
<p>13. Develop the roster co-operatively in a monthly staff meeting in the preceding mid-month</p>	<p>Respect, acknowledgement Transparency Fairness</p>
<p>14. Maintain the physical environment to ensure safety and enjoyable user experience</p>	<p>Stewardship Safety Respect, inclusion</p>

