

## **Cittaslow Goolwa, Alexandrina 2018-2019**

### **Summary of activities, achievements and highlights**

As they have for the past decade the industrious team of volunteers at the Community Garden in Kessell Road have been busy refurbishing tired garden beds and assigning two new garden beds to growing and delivering a continuous supply of fresh produce for the Grow Free Carts in the community. Meanwhile they continue to provide fresh produce to the Goolwa Childrens Centre with the generous sponsorship of the Goolwa Bendigo Bank.

Like the Community Garden, the Old Institute building in Cadell Street is leased from Alexandrina Council. 'Cittaslow Corner' houses our office and meeting facilities and creates a welcoming presence in the centre of the town. A squad of volunteers staff the Corner five days a week, providing information, selling merchandise and produce from across the region, showcasing the work of local artisans and producers and supplying the Grow Free Cart. New features this year included: stocking a wide range of environmentally friendly bags for shopping and refuse collection; installation of a new blind for the front door which doubles as signage when Cittaslow Corner is closed (designed by James Stewart and donated by members Lynda and Michael Pugliese of New House Blinds); becoming a central collection point for important initiatives like the Envision Hands Project (prosthetics made from bottle tops) and toiletries for people who are homeless in our community.

A long-standing flagship of Cittaslow Goolwa is the Food and Wine Group. Members have continued to meet monthly to share, appreciate and learn about food and wine in our region. The past year has seen a review of the format for the gatherings with members canvassed about preferences. During the warmer months they met at the Community Garden clubrooms where events such as the paella night attracted record numbers. Later it was decided to re-locate to the RSL Clubrooms during the winter months as a warmer and more comfortable evening venue. As well as the popular Seasonal Dinners, members of this group have been instrumental in organising public events for which Cittaslow is well-known including At The Wharf and Smoke Off, both of which offer the whole community access to great local food, wines and music. Each went from strength to strength this past year, continuing to attract large enthusiastic crowds and also generating a modest surplus which assists Cittaslow to fund and deliver important services and opportunities for the community.

Unpredictable weather patterns associated with the effects of Climate Change have not been kind to a couple of our ongoing initiatives. The Farmers Market runs on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month and offers access to a wonderful array of regional produce – including fruit and vegetables, olive oils, cheeses, fish, breads, plants, pastries and cakes. Even on the more inclement days, the combination of quality products, entertainment by accomplished musicians and great coffee has pleased the palate and warmed the hearts of patrons, ensuring that the market remains a congenial meeting place.

A partnership with Alexandrina Council saw the establishment of the Fruit Forest during the previous year beside the lake off Dawson Street in Goolwa. Despite a series of setbacks due to unseasonal weather, water salinity and damage by Corellas, the group of volunteers has persevered in regular watering and replacing damaged trees. (As a post script, with the onset of spring there are signs of recovery in the form of green shoots and the volunteers are more optimistic.)

With the formation of a small, energetic dedicated group of members, the concept of 'How To' workshops which grew out of the Food and Wine group has expanded to encompass opportunities for members to learn how to make everything from Beeswax wraps to tying knots with ropes or making paper flowers and

gift boxes. The well-patronised sessions this year included making Kombucha, Physical Activity for Wellbeing, and constructing 'native bee hotels'. Sessions are often run twice to cater for the numbers of interested members and there are now frequently two per month to fit in all of the sessions offered or requested by members. Such is their popularity that there are examples of people joining Cittaslow in order to attend the sessions.

The Environment Group was established during the year as a very timely and practical response to immediate issues like recycling as well as the urgent need to address the bigger problems associated with the impacts of climate change. Spin-off activities from this group include the regular working bees to clean up Randell Road as part of the Kesab 'adopt a road' program; the important rejuvenation of the Indigenous plantings in Jekejere Park; and, the monitoring of the refuse and recycling bins at Cittaslow events to educate the public about how to dispose of waste responsibly. A distinct highlight was the forum held at Alexandrina Council with Melissa Rebbeck, elected member and local farmer, who shared her knowledge of the tangible effects of climate change on the region and expertise in applying strategies to address soil degradation. One member of this group, Iain Langusch, continued to share his extensive practical experience with local schools, promoting awareness and interest in the natural environment. Students at the Investigator College, Currency Creek, worked with him in Conservation and Land Management studies, while at Goolwa Primary School they were involved in planting trees and rejuvenating the dune garden. In December 2018 Cittaslow Goolwa once again presented the Environment Award to a graduating student at Goolwa Primary School.

A major focus over the past year was the process of funding, commissioning, creating and constructing the public art work known as the Cittaslow Friendship Seat. The first major project of its kind by Cittaslow Goolwa, this mosaic has been a long-term labour of skill, generosity and commitment by many contributors, including: the volunteer members who conceived the idea, those who made successive grant applications, the artists who designed and constructed the seat, those who met weekly for months to cut tiles for the mosaic in the shed kindly provided by other members, those who managed the project and saw it through the various stages of permissions and approvals, just for a start.

Cittaslow continued to join in the various community festivals including having a float in the Xmas Pageant. In addition we had stalls at the two major community events held in Alexandrina in the first half of 2019: The Wooden Boat Festival in Goolwa and the 'Summer and Spokes' event for the Tour Down Under in Strathalbyn. As well as selling products made from fruit from members' gardens and promoting local makers, the stalls provided information about Cittaslow (and signed up a few new members!). As part of the Wooden Boat Festival, a team of Cittaslow members also provided catering for the Mayor's Reception in Signal Point, while our participation in Strathalbyn offered a chance to spread the word about Cittaslow principles.

Two initiatives were designed to publicise and promote Cittaslow and to increase recognition of its role in the community. The first was the introduction of a Cittaslow Calendar in 2019 which proved very popular and is to be repeated in 2020. The second was the design and printing of signature Cittaslow tee shirts promoting the positive concept of 'slow' and helping to remind the community who we are.

Three of our members travelled to Orvieto, Italy to attend the International Assembly in June 2019 (where they showed off the new tee shirts to an appreciative audience!). This is an enjoyable and informative experience. Understanding the international context and hearing about initiatives in other Cittaslow communities affords members a new perspective on what we achieve in Alexandrina, while providing a chance to meet new friends and catch up with old ones.