

Special Edition Free News Letter
CSCI CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

TALKABOUT

Issue No 185 SPECIAL EDITION



INNISFAIL & DISTRICT

Produced by the

Community Support Centre Innisfail Inc.

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Acknowledgment of Country

CSCI acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Mamu People, and we pay our respects to Elders past present and emerging.

SUBMISSIONS

Do you have a photo or story you'd like to share?

Please call us on: 4043 8400

DISCLAIMER

All articles in this magazine are printed in good faith for the community & do not necessarily represent the views of the Innisfail Community Support Centre Inc.

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Words from our CEO

Community Support Centre Innisfail (CSCI) celebrates its 50th year of delivering services to the local community during September and October 2025. We are very proud of our grass roots volunteer foundations that are continued today with local representation on our Management Committee that provides guidance and governance to the CSCI operations.

To celebrate this major milestone for the organisation, CSCI has recorded the history of our Management Committee in an Honour Board viewable on our website www.csci.org.au. There are some gaps in our records, so please feel welcome to contact me to update the information as needed.

The Talkabout is a very big part of CSCI traditions – starting 30 years ago in March 1995. The first edition provided information on children and family activities, local services, encouraged volunteering and celebrated International Women's Day. The Talkabout today continues in the tradition of celebrating all these original priorities.

In line with our vision, CSCI will host a Family Fun Fair from 9am-11 Thursday 2nd October at the Innisfail Neighbourhood Centre, 13-17 Donald St. There will be FREE fun activities and food available for children and their families or carers.

I look forward to celebrating the CSCI vision of 'Connected people, empowered families, resilient communities' during this milestone and into 2026.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT CENTRE INNISFAIL INVITES YOU TO HELP US CELEBRATE

50 YEARS OF SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

FREE NETWORKING BREAKFAST FEATURING GUEST SPEAKERS REFLECTING ON CSCI HISTORY



TUESDAY 30TH SEPT
Commencing at 7:30am

INNISFAIL NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE
13 -17 Donald Street, Innisfail

RSVP BY SEPT 5TH
to kahliah@csci.org.au



Kids Fun Fair

Help us Celebrate 50 YEARS



Free Food, Games, Water slide and Play, Story Time, Kindy Gym and More!

2nd October 9am – 11.00am
13 – 17 Donald Street



TALKABOUT

Julie French



My time at the Centre was marked by many seasons of change - each one challenging, rewarding, and rich with learning and growth.

We helped design and established the Innisfail Multi-Service Hub and transitioned out of the old School of Arts building. We responded to community needs in the wake of Cyclones Larry and Yasi, and later navigated the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our core service delivery grew significantly. From three programs with three staff in 2006, to eight services supported by a team of 20 - reflecting both increased demand and our strengthened capacity to respond. We also embraced new technology, implementing online client management systems and introducing an electric vehicle fleet. Throughout, we remained grounded in our mission and values, committed to being a steady anchor for our community in an era of exponential change.

Personally, I have been profoundly shaped by this journey. I'm grateful for the incredible committee members, staff, and volunteers I worked alongside, and especially for the privilege of walking beside our service users, hearing their stories and being witness to their resilience.

Jacqueline Szafran

I joined the management committee of the Community Support Centre in Innisfail to express my gratitude after completing my placement there.

During my time at the Centre, I was inspired by the wide range of issues we address and the positive impact we have on the community. I witnessed how we advocate for those in need and empower individuals and organizations to achieve positive outcomes, particularly through vital services like the Domestic Violence Service.

The committee's dedication to the Centre's mission is remarkable. It has transformed from a generalist organization into a leader in providing high-quality community, family, and child services.

Volunteering with this committee has been incredibly rewarding. It allows me to give back to the community while remaining engaged in meaningful work. Together, we are committed to creating a positive legacy for our community.



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Community Legends



The Community Advice and Information Centre in Innisfail once received funding to employ a social worker, Mrs. Margaret Worrall. In this role, she supported migrants and ethnic groups across Cardwell, Johnstone, and southern Mulgrave Shires, and trained volunteers in emergency relief to better serve the community. A graduate of the University of Melbourne in 1968, Margaret moved with her family to Innisfail in 1975. She played a key role in establishing the CAIC, worked part-time with the Department of Social Security, and had previously supported solo parents in Canberra.

Margaret loved the spirit of North Queensland and believed in empowering people to find their place in society, encouraging them to advocate for themselves and use available services. Her social work was more than a profession, it was her calling. Through her guidance on social security, citizenship, sponsorship, and many other matters, she became a trusted and compassionate presence.

She is remembered as a kind, empathetic woman who dedicated her life to service, inclusion, and lifting others up. Her legacy of care and commitment lives on in the Innisfail community and beyond.



Established in 1975, the Centre officially opened as the Community Advice and Information Centre. The Johnstone Shire Council offered the use of rooms in the Innisfail School of Arts building, where we were situated until December 2008.

The Centre was initially staffed by voluntary Information Officers. The Centre became an Incorporated Association in 1983; and in 1997 the Centre changed its name from Community Advice and Information Centre to Community Support Centre Innisfail Inc.

Sylvia Burns, pictured above a volunteer at the time, shared her memories of working alongside Margaret and others at the CAIC. She recalled being trained by Margaret through role-play scenarios and interviews and even receiving certificates that allowed volunteers to connect with community members, offering advice and referrals.

Sylvia remembered contributing to the Talkabout newsletter, assisting with food vouchers, and referring community members to services such as the Humpy, Salvation Army, and Chjowai Housing. She noted that volunteers used different coloured notepads for various circumstances, which helped keep their work organised.

Sylvia continued to work at the CAIC for eight years before going on to study at TAFE, vouching that volunteering at CAIC gave her the confidence to become more deeply involved in community work and talking to others easily.

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Words from Our Staff

"What is your most memorable moment working at CSCI"

"I am proud of the dedication and commitment I have had the honour of observing all staff in supporting and serving the community with professionalism, integrity and respect. The leadership team is supportive of staff."

"Staff and management are committed to the csci vision connected people, empowered families and resilient communities staff can explain how the service supports this vision, Management committee provides guidance and support to meet this vision. Together we achieve this vision"

"Inspiring strong female leadership working for this organization has been inspiring and the leadership is something that has left me in awe. The strong sense of community makes coming to work is fun and enjoyable. I feel blessed to work at CSCI."

"Going to "On Country Day, even though it was cold being a part of The Great Race and being too scared to answer the phone."

"Favourite part of CSCI is the cultures of the staff group and the relationships and hearing laughter from the halls and coming from the break room and being able to turn to any staff for support."

"I have memorable experiences whilst with the community support centre and found this a difficult question to answer. One that really stands out though was when I was in the cyclone recovery team and I worked on the "Wish flag Project", we ran community get togethers from Innisfail through to Cardwell giving people the opportunity to put forward their wishes on a flag which we hung over both in Cardwell and Innisfail. The concept based on Tibetan pray flags."

"Favourite part of CSCI is the cultures of the staff group and the relationships and hearing laughter from the halls and coming from the break room and being able to turn to any staff for support."

"I've had so many memories and experiences whilst working at CSCI I have found it rewarding to be able to support individuals' families and the community working alongside a supportive team with similar values. Being a part of child protection week events and Diamonds in the Sky over the years has been very memorable."

"My first day at CSCI even though I was a little nervous. I would like to thank my team including my team leader for making that day a good one for me. My team was very supportive."

"The friendships and support I have received since joining CSCI are something that makes working here enjoyable for me. Also, the opportunities to learn and expand my knowledge in various topics that I would not normally have the chance to."

"Becoming part of a team that inspires new challenges and ideas and helps to inform and evolve my practice in a supportive environment. My favourite memories involve various conversations with team members."





Committee may Establish Citizens' Advice Bureau

The Hawaiian Community Center is planning to establish a Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) to provide information and assistance to residents of the community. The CAB will be a voluntary organization of residents who will provide information and assistance to residents of the community. The CAB will be a voluntary organization of residents who will provide information and assistance to residents of the community. The CAB will be a voluntary organization of residents who will provide information and assistance to residents of the community.

Centre faces crisis

The Hawaiian Community Center is facing a crisis. The center is a voluntary organization of residents who provide information and assistance to residents of the community. The center is a voluntary organization of residents who provide information and assistance to residents of the community. The center is a voluntary organization of residents who provide information and assistance to residents of the community.

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