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WARM BLANKETS FOR EVERYONE
END OF CAMPAIGN REPORT

TASKS

Pitching:

- Created press release;
- Pitched to relevant local & interstate media outlets;
- Followed up pitches:

Secured:

- ABC Radio interview
- Triple M interview
- Newcastle Herald print & online feature
- NBN Newcastle interview
- Newcastle Weekly

For immediate release
May 2022

WARM BLANKETS FOR EVERYONE

The local NFP bringing warmth and care to communities in need



- Belmont locals, Sue Bardsley and Tonee Holley Knowles created their charity project, Warm Blankets for Everyone (WBFE) early in 2020;
- Since then, they have been able to donate 4000+ blankets and have gained over 70 volunteers;
- Through their work, WBFE supports over 30 Community Organisations;
- WBFE is looking for community support and donations to continue the important work it does.

In early 2020, two retirees, Tonee Holley Knowles and Sue Bardsley were making quilts for women's refuges with their local quilting group when they put a call out for fabric donations to 850 members of the Eastlakes U3A, Belmont, where Sue is a leader. After being overwhelmed with donations, Tonee and Sue sorted the fabrics and realised a lot were not suitable for patchwork and decided to repurpose the unused materials to start their charity project, Warm Blankets for Everyone (WBFE).

Working with local charities and organisations, WBFE supply warm blankets to those in need, including people experiencing homelessness, low income, the transition out of prison, and drugs and alcohol dependencies. Blankets are also provided to family, crisis women, aged care, and indigenous support centres.

The project initially started in Sue's lounge room, but a local church has given them the use of a former doctors' surgery for their workshop and storage. With over 70 volunteers now on board, WBFE has proudly donated over 4000+ blankets throughout the community.

"During COVID restrictions, volunteers were picking up prepared blanket kits from our home, ready to sew in their homes. We now have one of our 'teams' using the workshop four days a week," says Sue Bardsley.

Last year, WBFE was awarded \$1,000 by the Awesome Lake Mac Foundation to assist with the purchase and repair of sewing machines. As a self-funded project, Tonee and Sue were overwhelmed with the announcement. Further Government grant funding, at federal, state and council levels has helped support the project.

To continue the mission of Warm Blankets for Everyone, Sue and the team are looking to connect with locals and local businesses who would like to sponsor WBFE.

Sue says, "While we have a donated space to work from, we do need to pay for amenities, machine maintenance, extra materials, and general day-to-day items to keep things running smoothly. A sponsor would allow us to provide even more blankets to those in need. If anyone would like to be involved or donate, we encourage them to reach out to us through our website."

WBFE is also taking tax-deductible donations via its website (www.wbfe.org) for those wanting to support the incredible work the team does in the community.

Every blanket donated has a big impact on those on the receiving end. Blankets have been donated to the following local charities and community centres:



RESULTS OVERVIEW



TOTAL FEATURES

8



READERSHIP

1,811,694+

Date: 04.06.22

Print Readership: 50,000

Online readership: 835,763



WARMING WORK: Belmont charity Warm Blankets for Everyone has donated more than 4000 blankets to vulnerable people in the community since 2020 but founder Sue Bardsley is now looking to the community for donations to keep up with demand.

Retirees sewing a warm winter for all

BY ETHAN HAMILTON

AS GALE force winds ripped through the Hunter this week, and winter made its snow-inducing entrance, many Novocastrians took the opportunity to rug up in front of the heater with a cup of earl grey - or something a bit stronger.

But somewhere safe to nestle up in a warm blanket isn't an option for many in the region. That's where the generous skills of 75-year-old Sue Bardsley come into play.

In 2020, Ms Bardsley and fellow retiree Tonee Holley Knowles started their charity Warm Blankets for Everyone (WBFE).

Working out of Belmont with organisations like West Lakes Women and Children Refuge, Allambi Care and Survivors R Us, WBFE has donated more than 4000 blankets to vulnerable people in the community.

WBFE started after the pair put out a call to members of Eastlakes U3A, where Ms Bardsley is a leader, for fabric donations to make quilts for women's refuges.

They soon realised much of the abundance of donated fabric was too "heavy duty" for quilting so repurposed the unused material for a new charity.

The charity's main service is using donated material to make blankets with polar fleece lining, which they source from a company who makes the fleece from recycled bottles. On top of this, WBFE pass on donated blankets to those in need and have a team of knitters and crocheters.

"We are sending out several hundred blankets a week and demand is still increasing," Ms Bardsley said. "We send ten a week just to one homeless service and could increase that amount if we had the ability."

Initially working from Ms Bardsley's lounge room, the project has since been given access to a former doctors' surgery by Belmont Baptist Church for their workshop

and storage.

Ms Bardsley said that during the pandemic, the more than 70 volunteers had to adapt their service to the community.

"During COVID restrictions, volunteers were picking up prepared blanket kits from our home, ready to sew in their homes," she said on Friday. "It has been a really tragic time for a lot of people and it's heart-breaking to hear the stories of young families living out of their cars."

"We now have one of our teams using the workshop four days a week and today we had two new volunteers join."

With funding from Lake Macquarie Council, Belmont 16s, Amazing Lake Macquarie and government initiatives like the Social Sector Support fund, WBFE has kept up with demand.

However, now the funding is coming to an end, Ms Bardsley is looking to local businesses and residents for support to continue WBFE's work.

"We do need to pay for amenities, machine maintenance, extra materials, and general day-to-day items to keep things running smoothly," she said. "The major cost is polar fleece and without that the blankets would be useless in this weather."



FULL TIME: WBFE founder Sue Bardsley making blankets for those in need.

Date: 06.06.22

Weekly Listenership: 557,000+

Transcript: "And a call for help from an incredible important local charity, especially now winter is upon us. Warm Blankets For Everyone has been fixing up donated blankets for thousands of people in need since they launched in Belmont two years ago. They're now after donations and hopefully more volunteers to help with the sewing and stitch work. Founder, Sue Bardsley says the demand is almost unprecedented – "Absolutely flat out we are sending out hundreds of blankets per week. Some of them are on standing orders for 10-20 per week to various organisations, and then others just ring up and say we need five now."





ABC Newcastle Radio

ABC Upper Hunter

Date: 09.06.22

Online Readership: 31,157

Listenership NC: 44,000

Listenership UH:

Website:

<https://www.abc.net.au/newcastle/programs/breakfast/warm-blankets/13921804>

Latest



Volunteers in Belmont helping keep people warm

29m ago / ABC NEWCASTLE

A volunteer group in Belmont has been busy putting together warm blankets for those in need.

But the group needs more hands on deck, and donations of fabric and wool to help meet demand.

The ABC's Jenny Marchant went along to the workshop in Belmont to speak to a few members.

Broadcast 5h ago

Share   

Newcastle, Belmont



Date:09.06.22

Website:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1SPoUoqo9hllK5DjplrWlGZqmZYXe8POQ?usp=sharing>

Viewers: 256,774





Date: 20.06.2022

Website:

<https://newcastleweekly.com.au/belmont-duo-provides-warmth-and-care-to-communities-in-need/>

Readership/viewers: 37K

weekly website sessions

The screenshot shows the Newcastle Weekly website interface. At the top, it displays the temperature as 7.5°C in Newcastle and the date as Thursday, June 23, 2022. Navigation menus include 'JUST IN', 'NEWS', 'SPORT', 'ENTERTAINMENT', 'LIFESTYLE', 'FOOD & WINE', 'NEWCASTLE'S BEST', 'PUZZLES', 'COMMUNITY', and 'WEATHER'. The article is categorized under 'Home > Community > Charity'. The main image shows Sue Bardsley, co-founder of Warm Blankets For Everyone, smiling while operating a sewing machine. A 'LATEST' sidebar on the right lists other news items: 'Man charged after police pursuit in Hunter region' (Crime, 59 mins ago), 'Swan confident junior league will avoid COVID hangover' (Local sport, 15 hours ago), 'Deck of unsolved murders an 'ace' in the police...' (Local, 17 hours ago), and 'Hunter performers'. The article title is 'Belmont duo provides warmth and care to communities in need' by Rod Thompson, dated June 20, 2022. The article text describes the work of Warm Blankets For Everyone (WMFE), a not-for-profit organization that has donated over 4,000 coverings and supported 30 selfless groups. It mentions that WMFE is seeking assistance and donations to continue its mission and is hoping to connect with locals and Hunter-based businesses who will sponsor them. A quote from Sue Bardsley states: "While we have a donated space to work from, we do need to pay for amenities, machine maintenance, extra materials and general day-to-day items to keep things running smoothly," Ms Bardsley said. Another quote says: "Sponsorship will allow us to provide even more blankets to those in need." A final quote reads: "If anyone would like to be involved, or donate, we encourage them to reach out to us through our website."

The photograph shows a well-organized storage area for blankets and quilts. The shelves are filled with various types of coverings, including folded quilts, blankets, and smaller items. Some items are labeled with tags, such as 'Medium' and 'Small'. The quilts feature different patterns and colors, including floral, geometric, and solid colors. The overall appearance is one of a well-maintained and diverse collection of warm coverings.

"Every blanket has a big impact on those on the receiving end."

Less than three years ago, the two retirees were making quilts for women's refuges with their local quilting group when they put a call out for fabric donations to 850 members of the Eastlakes U3A, Belmont, where Ms Bardsley is a leader.

After being overwhelmed with contributions, the pair sorted the fabrics.

They soon realised a lot were not suitable for patchwork and decided to repurpose the unused materials to start their charity project, Warm Blankets for Everyone.

Working with local charities and organisations, WBFE supplies warm coverings to those in need, including people experiencing homelessness, low income, the transition out of prison, and drugs and alcohol dependencies.

Blankets are also provided to family, crisis women, aged care and indigenous support centres.

The project initially started in Ms Bardsley's lounge room, however a local church has given them the use of a former doctors' surgery for their workshop and storage.

"During COVID-19 restrictions, volunteers were picking up prepared blanket kits from our home, ready to sew in their homes," she said.

"We now have one of our 'teams' using the workshop four days a week."

In 2021, WBFE was awarded \$1,000 by the awesome Lake Mac Foundation to assist with the purchase and repair of sewing machines.

"Since we're self-funded, Tonee and I were overwhelmed with that announcement," Ms Bardsley said.

"Further government grant funding, at federal, state and council levels, has helped support the project, too."

WBFE can also accept tax-deductible donations via its website (www.wbfe.org) for those wanting to support the team's incredible work.

**Thanks,
Phoebe & Megan**

www.olivepr.com.au

