



The Mai-Wel Group History Book



Proudly celebrating more than 50 years of providing opportunity and choice to people with a disability in the Hunter Valley region.





The Mai-Wel Group History Book depicts the evolution to full inclusion by people with a disability. The journey through language, opportunity, workforce participation and community integration.

“A child who is lost, looks for a star in a lonely space... seeks along an empty sea-shore where he looks to find a friend... probes the dark-filled corners of a strange and echoing room. Sometimes, from out of the unnamed and menacing shadows that gather and cling, there is only the voiceless clasp of a strong, warm hand that, in reassurance... in understanding... and in love... can properly say those things for which there are no words... things that must be said to every child. Be sure he finds this in you.”

***An excerpt from Maitland’s School for Sub-Normal Children
official opening programme
21 March, 1964.***

“To anyone who knows or has someone with special needs in their lives, don’t give up. There is support out there, you’re not alone. Follow your dreams and go for it. There may be some challenges, but Mai-Wel will be there to support you. I am so grateful for the opportunity that has been given to me.”

***Mai-Wel Client, Emma Chapple addressing local
employers at an International Day of People with a
Disability event
1 December, 2011.***

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Preface

The Mai-Wel Group most gratefully acknowledges the work of the families whose vision, dedication and persistence are the single reason the organisation exists today.

Together with the community, both individuals and businesses, this group of people were pivotal in the establishment and ongoing success of Mai-Wel and most notably, making a difference to the lives of people with a disability.

A group of concerned families met in Maitland more than 50 years ago with a vision to build a special school for their children with physical and intellectual disabilities.

They wanted to provide an outlet for education, opportunity and purposeful employment for their children. Some of those pioneering parents are still involved with the organisation today, helping others to achieve their goals and realise their potential for life.

The underlying success of the organisation, which was originally named Mai-Wel as it stands for Maitland Welfare, is its involvement with the local community. The community support has not waived since the first meeting held on 21 November 1960 at Brough House, Church Street, Maitland.

Their dedication, sacrifice and determination were the foundation of making The Mai-Wel Group what it is today; one of the largest providers of disability services in the Hunter Region.

A tireless campaign of community support and fundraising has been the hallmark of the organisation and the story of Mai-Wel is one of success, hardwork, resilience, love and dedication.

The Mai-Wel Group had progressed through the years because of the outstanding optimism of individuals, families, staff and the ongoing support of the wider community.

This book acknowledges the story of those people who had a vision.

Foreword

A great organisation is invariably supported by many people behind the scenes. I am very pleased to be associated with the telling of the Mai-Wel story.

From very humble beginnings with a small core of hardworking volunteers to grow to the successful organisation that it is today that caters for the needs of so many local people with disabilities.

The development of Mai-Wel is so special because of the volunteers, many of whom donated their time, goods and skills to support the development of the school to cater for children who faced severe disadvantage in mainstream classrooms.

Next came the development of the workshop. The setting up of both the school and the workshop provided many challenges. These were met head on by the parents and friends of Mai-Wel, who always believed in the single purpose of helping people with a disability, lead a worthwhile and satisfying life, where all felt that they were making a contribution to society.

From these small beginnings, with the complete support of the local community and especially the business sector, Mai-Wel is what it is today.

Mai-Wel reflects the best of contemporary practice and ensures that the workers are supported and encouraged in a diverse range of projects. Many of these programs have been going over the five decades of Mai-Wel's existence.

This book is a product that tells a story of that hard work. The idea for the book grew out of conversations over the dinner table and a perceived need to interview as many people as possible who have supported the development of Mai-Wel from its early beginnings.

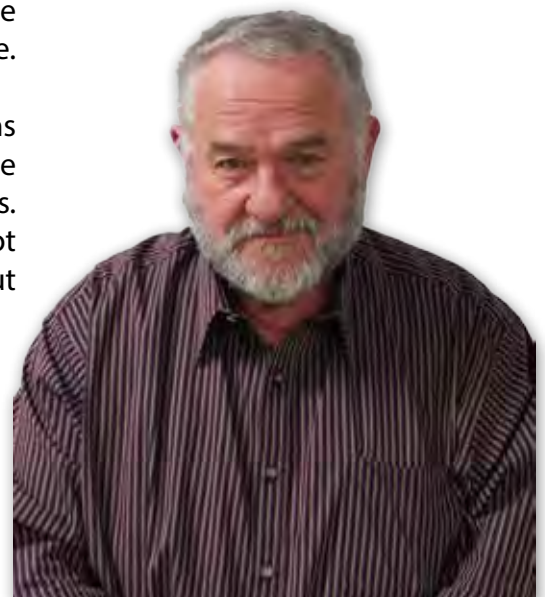
There have been many people who are integral to the creation of this book. I thank them for the hours of the time they have given to me. I have talked to many people about their experiences at Mai-Wel and I thank them for sharing their honesty, frustration, heartache and eventual jubilation with me.

Their insight and recollections have been essentially the basis for this project's success. The conversations were not only informative for me, but enjoyable too.

I would personally like to thank Judy Nicholson, the Local Studies Librarian at Maitland City Library, for all of her assistance in helping me to track down 50 years of newspaper articles. I would also like to say a special thank you, to Mrs Victoria Tatum, the Communications and Corporate Identity Manager at Mai Wel, who is responsible for the layout of the book.

Congratulations Mai-Wel on the first 50 years of your history. The steadfast dedication of all involved will ensure a strong future for this marvelous organisation.

*Alek Schulha
Researcher
28 February, 2014.*



President

Message from the President

Looking Forward; Mai-Wel of the Future

With the advent of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) at its launch site in Newcastle, we can glimpse a little of the future shape of the disability sector. In 2015 the NDIS will be upon us – a great opportunity to embrace necessary change for the benefit of those for whom we care most.

Mai-Wel is a service based organisation, and whether we are providing assisted employment, accommodation, day programs, skills enhancement or any other service we will all see and feel change. The challenge is to use this positively and ensure that the highest quality outcomes remain the key driver for all of us.

One example is the retirement of the Mai-Wel Lodge after many years of faithful service. The delivery model for accommodation today and going forward will be via individual homes that could be located in any street in Maitland. Our first two new homes will be under construction shortly, and in service by early 2015. Mai-Wel's Urban Living Project will take several years to complete, but what a difference it will make!

With NDIS, our challenge is to remain relevant in all that we offer; to under promise and to over deliver. We will no doubt add some new products to our range, and the diversity available in the wider marketplace will truly drive person centred management in the future. Mai-Wel's extended family will just be a little bigger as we operate in this wider market place.

Mai-Wel's board and senior management team are all forward thinking in their view of these opportunities, and will be working hard to make sure that the next 50 years are just as wonderful in their own way as those behind us.

*Graham Burns
President
25 February, 2014.*



CEO

Message from the CEO

Mai-Wel has a proud 50 year plus history of providing opportunities to people with a disability and I am proud of the company it is today. I am honoured to be the Chief Executive Officer at this space in time and to deliver this message.

This company began when parents and the local community banded together with a vision for better opportunities for children with a disability. Through their vision, lobbying to government, fundraising and persistence they realised their very first dream, the South Street Special School, which would later evolve and become Mai-Wel Limited.

The head office for this now much larger and multi-faceted company, The Mai-Wel Group, is based in Telarah, in the same suburb and street where the services first commenced.

Across the years, these original visionaries have volunteered their time or shared their expertise to build on the original dream. The Mai-Wel Group also has a dedicated pool of committee members and in the later years, directors of the Mai-Wel board, along with management, staff and families and members of the Maitland and Lower Hunter community which ensures the organisation's success.

Employment opportunities have expanded and The Mai-Wel Group now offer a wide and varied range of other services that continue to advance the lives of people with a disability across the Hunter Valley, Newcastle and Port Stephens areas.

I take the opportunity to acknowledge each and every person who has made a contribution in the beginning and in the early years, the pioneers who lead the way. I acknowledge also, the current directors, management and staff, we are now charged with ensuring this wonderful organisation flourishes in the future.

The introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will change the way the company delivers services while ensuring people with a disability have a greater opportunity for decision making and choice. They will drive the service provision; the next phase of true inclusion.

I would like to personally thank Alek Schulha for his devotion, hardwork and tireless hours spent in researching Mai-Wel's history. Your legacy, much like the visionaries who started Mai-Wel, will live on in this book.

Most importantly, thank you to the people with a disability who choose to come to The Mai-Wel Group to work or access a service. Without them, we simply wouldn't exist. Every time a person with a disability achieves a goal, large or small, they deliver an extra dose of energy and enthusiasm to staff, inspiring us to assist and support them to meet their goals and aspirations.

*Pennie Kearney
Chief Executive Officer
28 February, 2014.*



About The Mai-Wel Group

Our Vision

To provide opportunity and choice to people with a disability.

Our Mission

Delivering flexible and innovative solutions to enable people with a disability to live the life they choose.

Our Values

Mai-Wel will:

- Focus on the individual
- Foster leadership
- Develop partnerships
- Encourage integrity
- Inspire innovation
- Support aspiration
- Involve and embrace community
- Extend trust
- Maintain accountability
- Undertake risk management

to make each day a step toward achieving the goals and dreams of the people central to the organisation's mission – people with a disability.

The Mai-Wel Group is one of the larger disability service providers in the Lower Hunter Region, providing services and programs to more than 900 people with a disability across nine local government areas.

Mai-Wel employs more than 250 support and administrative staff and 105 supported employees within our four Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE's). Mai-Wel's ethos carries throughout the organisation, from management, staff and on to clients.

Who We Are Today

With a strong 50 plus year history, The Mai-Wel Group is focused on offering vibrant and innovative services which provide opportunities for people with a disability to be the drivers of the support they require to live the life they choose.

The Mai-Wel Group is committed to providing the highest quality service for each individual, delivering variety with enthusiasm

Beginning

The Beginning

1960 The Mai-Wel Group was born from the vision of a few families in the 1960's to provide their children with a disability an outlet for education, opportunity and purposeful employment.

Their original vision was to build a special school for their children with an intellectual disability. The school was known as the South Street Special School however, as with the majority of other similar schools, was taken over by the Department of Education in 1977.

The first group of parents who consisted of; Mrs Roberts, Mrs Stuart, Mrs Skinner, Mr Everett and Mr Measures met and shared their concerns for their children.

These people formed the initial parent group of the branch which was subsequently formed from that meeting. They were supported by members of the district parents and community association and the teachers federation.

The first recorded meeting was held on 21 November, 1960, at Brough House, Church Street, Maitland.

The meeting was chaired by Mr Ivan Brodie (then principal of Telarah Public School) and attended by Mr Bob Brown (Member for Charlton, Kurri Kurri High), Mr Dennis Dinning (Maitland Girls High School), Mr Smith (Department of Education), Miss Edna Heslop (Maitland Primary School), Mrs Joyce Gibbs (Maitland Primary School), Mrs Norma Tucker (Maitland Infants School), Mrs Betty Boughton (Telarah Public School) and Mr and Mrs Bert Parish (District Council of Parents Citizens).

The meeting decided to approach the Mayor of Maitland, Ald. Harry Skilton, to call a public meeting to look into the needs of the *intellectually handicapped* children in the area.

Plan To Aid Backward Children

The Mayor of Maitland (Ald. H. T. Skilton) will call a public meeting to discuss the education of mentally-retarded children in this district.

This follows moves by the district Parent-Teacher Educational Council.

At a meeting last night the president and publicity officer of the Newcastle centre for mentally retarded children (Mr. Davereaux and Mr. Strowther) urged the council to work for a school in Maitland.

A spokesman for the council (Mr. I. Brodie) said these children, given care and training, could find a worthwhile place in the community.

He said the members of the council wanted to ensure that local handicapped children should be given every opportunity to do so.

The council wanted an insight into the position in Maitland and urged all parents of handicapped



ALD. SKILTON

children to attend the meeting, he said.

Mr. Strowther will speak on the education and progress of mentally retarded children.

Ald. Skilton has set the meeting for May 4 in the Town Hall.



Above: Brough House, Church Street, Maitland, housed the first recorded meeting.



Above: Fundraising began early and was crucial in the school's establishment.

Above: Article in the Maitland Mercury, 19 April, 1960.

Establishment

1961 In February this year a public meeting, called by the late Mayor of Maitland, Ald. Harry Skilton, was held in the old library building (now the cultural centre). The meeting was addressed by Mrs Strowther and Mr Devereaux from Delando Crescent, a Newcastle organisation, who donated two pounds to commence the association's funds.

The District Councillor for schools in the Maitland area, Mr R. Taylor, stated that the Department of Education was fully prepared to give guidance and facilities if an association was formed.

Publicity officer, Mrs Strowther, from the Newcastle Sub-Normal Children's Welfare Association, was guest speaker for the evening.

Mrs Strowther believed *"handicapped children need the help and encouragement of all"*.

"We must be ready now to help the child help himself. There are difficulties in the way, but these can easily be overcome by the sincerity and eager purpose of parents to join together and ensure that these children become part and parcel of the community."

A meeting was later held on the 12 May, 1961, at Telarah Public School electing Mr Wal Measures as president (a position which he held for 13 years), Mrs L Vidler as secretary and Mr Bert Parish as treasurer. A further one pound donation from the Newcastle Sub Normal Children's Association was received.

It was at this meeting it was decided that the cost of membership to the association would be ten shillings per family unit.

Land on South Street, Telarah, was released from Maitland City Council for use and was later donated to the organisation, in 1970.

On 7 December, 1961, president Mr Measures, reported that plans continued to ensure the school would open the following year.

The Department of Education promised the association buildings for the school and paid a subsidy towards it as soon as it was functioning.

SCHOOL SOON FOR RETARDED?

Above: An article in the Maitland Mercury, 15 May, 1961.

SITE NEAR FOR SPECIAL SCHOOL

Mayor of Maitland, Alderman Skilton, will negotiate with A.M.L. and F. Co. Ltd. for the release of leased land for use by Maitland Sub-Normal Children's Association.

Above: An article in the Maitland Mercury 6 December, 1961.

To charity—£3600

Above: An article in the Maitland Mercury reporting on Maitland Lions Club's donation to the association 7 December, 1961.

Formed

Branch Formed

1962 On 26 February, 1962, the branch was formed and the decision made to affiliate with a parent body in Sydney, known then as the Children's Sub-Normal Welfare Association.

Much work was done by the committee and all schools and parents in the area were contacted to find any pupils who would benefit from the new school.

The association obtained some disused army huts from Greta Migrant Camp for 300 pounds and these were transported onto the South Street site. Desks were received from Telarah school and an assortment of pre-owned kitchen cupboards and wardrobes were donated for school storage from members of the community.

An appeal was made to parents to attend a working bee at the school site, preparing the school buildings. Parents and members of the community assisted to clear the site and help with the cartage of bricks from Greta Migrant Centre.

Fundraising efforts continued, with appeals by then reaching 237 pounds and further promised donations of 600 pounds would soon follow.

A fetes was held at the Mt. Pleasant Street Sportsground, which was well supported by all citizens, churches and businesses in the community. Unfortunately, this event was washed out due to one of the many floods which occurred in that year.

Nine students were enrolled in the school under the supervision of Mrs Bignell and Mrs Rose. Once the parents realised how much the children benefited from attending the school, the numbers increased.

Over the duration of six months, Maitland Lions club donated 3600 pounds, which went towards acquiring a bus. Members of the club were rostered to drive the bus each day, transporting the students to and from school.

A variety concert was held in August at Maitland Methodist Hall and included items by a local music group, an exhibition of ballet, vocal items, two one-act plays by Maitland Repertory Society and a performance from a Sydney Magician, *Mesram*.

Electrical wiring of the school was completed free of charge by Hunter Valley County Council Social Club, with locals donating their time to complete other tasks such as plastering.

In October, 1962, the association made its final preparations to open the school in mid-March 1963. Along with the establishment of three buildings from Greta camp, officers from the Department of Education approved plans for facilities and equipment.

At this point in time, 16 students were enrolled and eight people had applied for the position of teacher.

"We believe the school will be a worthy community project and hope to have service organisations combine to see it implemented", said Mr Wal Measures, president (The Maitland Mercury, 'Opening by mid-March', 24 October, 1962).



**SUB-NORMAL CHILDREN'S
WELFARE ASSOCIATION**



Above: Raelene Wiseman at her desk.

3 HUTS FOR S.N. SCHOOL

Maitland Sub-Normal Children's Association has acquired the buildings its needs to start a school.

Three huts at Greta Camp had been purchased by arrangement with the Department of the Interior, the president (Mr. W. Measures) reported this week.

● BOUGHT FROM GRETA CAMP

Mr. Measures told a meeting of the Association that the buildings would be moved to Maitland within two months.

They will be sited at South Street, Telarah,

where Maitland City Council has made land available on lease for the sub-normal school.

Mr. Measures said the Association would now aim to open the school at the New Year.

Treasurer

So far, 16 children from all around the Maitland district had been enrolled as its first pupils, he said. The school would not

cater just for children from the Maitland City Council area, he stressed.

The association's treasurer (Mr. A. G. Parish) told the meeting that funds had been substantially increased by a recent teenage dance with Rob E.G., and a successful variety concert in the Methodist Hall.

The secretary (Mrs. E. Vidler) said more funds had been raised by the school's "silver coin appeal" for the association.

More than £150 had been raised with some schools still to join, she reported.

Mr Measures said today the drive for funds to establish the school would continue.

"We have to renovate the buildings, provide equipment and transport facilities for the equipment and carry sufficient funds for the teacher's salary," he said.

Future fund-raising activities would include the next orchid show by the Orchid Society, which had offered to donate half the proceeds to the Association.



Above: The school site, 1962.

Above: A clipping from the Maitland Mercury, 30 August, 1962.

School's In

1963 13 pupils were enrolled in early 1963 to start on the first day while work on the school continued, ready for the first term. On 7 February, 1963, the Maitland Apex Club fenced the school grounds as part of their 'service to the community' day work.

In a survey conducted early in the year it was recorded that the Maitland Sub-Normal Children's Association required more than 200 separate items of equipment for the school ranging from refrigerators to sticks of chalk.

Mrs W M Curzon, an advisory mental health officer with the British Ministry of Health, visited Maitland on the 13 February, 1963, as part of a state-wide tour. Mrs Curzon visited students at the South Street School and later addressed parents and members of the Mai-Wel executive and Maitland Sub-Normal Children's Association.

Mrs Curzon reported that she was highly impressed by the work voluntary groups were doing in Australia to help establish schools however believed the country needed more state assistance for the training of *sub-normal children*, a teacher training program for staff working with *backward children* and more residential schools to overcome travelling problems.

On the 25 February, 1963, Mr Measures was elected for the third term as president of the association.

A sports day fete was held on 23 March, 1963, raising funds to help complete the toilet block and provide equipment for the school.

By June, another seven students enrolled at the school and the Maitland community's support continued with donations of chairs, cupboards, desks and other essential items.

In early May, the school approved a waiting list after a rush of applicants were received wanting to enrol in the school. The association agreed that a waiting list would be desirable due to the financial shortages and inability of two teachers to cope with more students.

When the school reached sufficient numbers, a subsidy for an extra teacher would be available from the Department of Education.

Mr Measures reported in a Maitland Mercury article on the 8 May, 1963, that heavy establishment costs had left the association's finances "*on the borderline.*"

"Eventually we hope to cater for every sub-normal child the Department of Education approves for our classes."

"We also envisage a private class for pupils over 16 years of age."

"However, the development will be governed to a large extent by our finances and by public support."

At a meeting on the 26 August, 1963, it was decided that the Maitland Sub-Normal Children's Association would be renamed. Two names for the school were chosen; Mai-Wel and Eelah. The committee decided on Mai-Wel, after *Maitland* and *Welfare*.



Above: South Street School students, David Andrews and Steven Skinner, 1963.



Above: A clipping from the Maitland Mercury, 4 January, 1963.



Above: South Street School students at an outside class.



Above: A clipping from the Maitland Mercury, 27 August, 1963.



Above: South Street School site.

Opening

Official Opening

1964 The Maitland School for Sub-Normal Children, operating as Mai-Wel, was officially opened 21 March, 1964, by Mr Milton Morris, MLA at the school premises, South Street, Telarah.

The opening of the school was paired with a colonial style fete, which provided something new for Maitland. This fete with a difference included: a sheaf throwing contest, stepping the distance, a nail driving contest, broom throwing, sulky rides, horseshoe throwing, green dancing and hoop-la races.

Maitland trotting identity, Mr Bert Greedy, planned the event with proceeds going towards the school.

In preparing for the opening, members of the vestry of St. Luke's Church of England, Telarah, painted the interior of the classrooms while Maitland Lions Club, the Telarah Bachelor Boys and Angel Inn Social Club painted the exterior of the school.

The teacher in charge at the time, Miss Bignall, assisted children to make articles to stock the stalls for the fete that was held the same day.

Members soon formed a women's auxillary and a school management committee. As of 1964, eighteen pupils were attending the School.

Officers elected for 1964 were: patron, the Member for Maitland, Mr Milton Morris, the Mayor of Maitland, Ald. H T Skilton, president, Mr W Measures, vice-president, L Brody and J Richardson, secretary, Mrs L Vidler, treasurer, Mr A G Parish, committee, Mr L Roberts, Mrs W Measures, Mrs A G Parish, Mr A Everett, Mr L Vidler and Mrs J Tucker.

YESTERDAY . . . TODAY

. . . TOMORROW

Mai-Wel School is a glowing example of Maitland's community spirit.

Three years ago the Mai-Wel site was a vacant block of land and the 19 students had no avenue for education open to them.

Today, the school and equipment have a total value of about £7,000 and the children are on the way to becoming useful members of the community.

The school is only the first stage of the overall plan to care for handicapped youngsters. The Maitland Association has as its immediate aim the provision of a sheltered workshop . . . a place where youngsters who graduate from Mai-Wel classes, can do useful work and earn a wage.

Then, as stage three, the association hopes to expand to provide a residential section for the many youngsters not within travelling distance of Mai-Wel.

Association members are justifiably proud of Mai-Wel and of the community support their project has inspired.

They realise, however, that they still have years of work ahead of them before they can . . . "properly say those things for which there are no words . . ."

Above: An excerpt from the official opening programme.



Above: Raelene Wiseman a student at the school with her official opening programme.



*Above: Guests at the official opening.
Left: Arriving at the fete.*

Community Support

1965 - 1971

From the beginning it was the association's intent to provide the following in order of preference; to set up a school for sub-normal children, to establish a workshop where these people could work and to finally provide accommodation through the establishment of a hostel or lodge as it was later known.

Throughout these stages and well into the 21st century, the community support Mai-Wel receives has been pivotal to the success of the organisation.

It was in 1966, that thoughts and actions turned to the future needs of the students who were growing older. In 1967 the Mai-Wel committee again approached the local community of Maitland, appealing for assistance to allow them to address the next stage in these young people's lives, when the time came for them to leave school.

Fundraising efforts were led by Mr Ernie Yeatman, who was enthusiastic in engaging as many people as possible in the community for the walkathons.

Members of the community participated in a 50 mile course walkathon.

The walkathons became one method by which funds were raised. These funds were used to create suitable work options for young people with a disability.

The bachelor boys were a group of young men who lived in Telarah and were members of the nearby Telarah Bowling Club. Every week they donated one pound to Mai-Wel and at weekends either painted buildings or laid concrete paths and driveways around the school. They had no personal involvement with the school but simply wanted to give back.

Members of The Angel Inn Hotel Social Club also donated money to Mai-Wel over a number of years. The hotel, which stood in High Street, Maitland, closed in 1966.

The early committee raised money by holding walkathons, lamington drives, street stalls, fetes, bingo days, raffles and fashion parades to name a few.

In 1966, the Maitland Lions Club raised funds for the purchase of a new bus for the school after four years of transporting the students back and forth. The new Morris mini-bus comfortably transported 14 children.

The Mai-Wel Sheltered Workshop was officially opened in May, 1971. Thirteen people with a disability who had graduated from the school started work in the workshop. The building cost \$150,000, of which \$50,000 was raised through a series of marathon walks. Walkathons became the method of raising funds which were used to create work options for young people with a disability.

More community fundraising took place when funds were needed to construct a hostel on the South Street site adjacent to the workshop.

In 1970, Maitland City Council agreed to give the branch the land on South Street on which the school stood.

OUR BIG WALK

FEW events have captured the attention and encouraged the participation of Maitland district people in recent years as much as the Mai-Wel Marathon Walkabout.

In the two walks so far, 2900 walkers have raised \$54,000 for the Mai-Wel school for sub-normal children and other organisations.

The school expects to clear about \$23,000 for a unit to occupy the time of mentally handicapped people above school age.

The principle of the walk is simple.

● Organisers lay out a 50-mile course and ask participants to walk as far as they can in 12 hours.

● Walkers sign up sponsors who will pay

them so much for each mile they cover.

● At least half the money they raise must go to Mai-Wel. The rest goes to organisations or funds the walkers represent or support.

● Walk officials make awards to walkers who raise the most money, and cover the 50 miles in the shortest time.

Business houses provide free refreshments along the route and steak near the halfway point, Maitland Show-ground.

The first walk got underway about 6 am on Sunday, November 5,



**\$54,000 over
two years**

1967. First off the mark were Member for Maitland, Mr. Milton Morris, and Maitland Chamber of Commerce president, Mr. K. J. Tucker.

Official records showed 846 walkers took part, although several checkpoints counted 1200.

Greta walkers filled the first four "places" in the event. Mr. Bob McElwaine recorded the best performance, covering 50 miles in nine hours, 46 minutes — two hours 14 minutes under the stipulated time of 12 hours. He was setting a pace of 6½ mph at one stage

Above: Article from the Maitland Mercury, 24 July, 1969.



Above: South Street school students with dolls, 1965.

Workshop

Mai-Wel Workshop

1972 - 1975

Mai-Wel Industries was established in 1972 as a *sheltered* workshop. The workshop was officially opened by The Hon W Wentworth, then Minister for social services.

The Mai-Wel Industries Sheltered Workshop was set-up with the aim of aligning the workplace as much as possible to the general workforce. The goal was to provide reward for labour, pride in manufacture and a sense of belonging within the group. The Mai-Wel Industries Sheltered Workshop was built as a modern facility originally accommodating 65 people, with option for future extensions, which could offer a capacity for 75-100 people.

Mai-Wel's first business, which operated within the sheltered workshop was a combined packaging and timber manufacturing business.

The workshop was created in response to the need for purposeful employment for the same group of children and young adults, who had started at the school.

Attendance at the workshop depended on available public transport, which did not meet the requirements of all prospective supported employees.

After six years of walkathons, the association had raised \$50,000 to go towards the workshop. Mai-Wel also received some government assistance to make the workshop possible.

In 1974 a lack of local business forced the workshop to accept Sydney contracts including packing Gladbags and making seat assembly parts for Leyland's P76 car.

From the workshop a mowing crew, later known as Mai-Wel Contract Services, was established. The mowing crew allowed for greater employment and training opportunities for people with a disability. In 1994 the mowing crew evolved into Hunter Grounds and Garden, providing a range of yard and house maintenance services to individuals and industry.

Over time, the Mai-Wel workshop developed into four highly successful businesses (which exist today) including: TimeSavers, the Enterprise Centre, Mai-Wel E-Cycling Services and PACE Setters (located in the original workshop building).



Above: Gordon, Nola and Glenn Warby at the workshop.



Above: Mark Bowden and Suzie Stuart.



Above: The original mowing crew; Jenny Barratt, Robbie Ernst, Robert Winfield, Jason King and Steven Bye.



Opportunity

New Opportunities

1976 - 1980

The Mai-Wel Opportunity Shop was established in June 1976, as another means to raise funds for the organisation. The opportunity shop was opened by Mrs Margaret Munton in a house in Telarah Street, Telarah.

In 1992, the opportunity shop raised a record amount of \$40,154.96.

The opportunity shop was operated by the auxiliary group;

"A small band of dedicated ladies with an intense interest in their son or daughters welfare and the desire for Mai-Wel's continuation and progress"; Mrs Pam Bonomini, auxiliary president 1992.

The opportunity shop also received support from a small group of volunteers with no direct link to Mai-Wel. The shop received clothes, bric-a-brac, small items of furniture and other items from generous donations from the community.

The auxiliary ran a diverse range of fundraising activities including monthly lamington drives, street stall in August in the Maitland Heritage Mall, stalls at Steamfest, Maitland City Bowling Club's craft day, stall and gate takings at the Maitland Markets, garage sales and raffles.

In June 1976, a heated therapeutic swimming pool at South Street Public School was opened. This was a project of East Maitland Lions Club, who worked tirelessly to raise more than \$12,000. Maitland City Council also waived the building fee.

The opportunity shop later moved to Rutherford Shopping Centre in 1990, and closed on the 22 December, 2005.

The NSW Department of Education took over responsibility of the South Street Special School in 1977. The school moved to new purpose built premises at Metford in 2002 and more recently to East Maitland. It is now known as Hunter River Community School.

On 1 July 1977, the first hostel and supported accommodation, Villa Maria was opened in King Street, East Maitland. It later closed in April, 1978.



Above: The Mai-Wel Opportunity Shop, 1985.



Above: The shop after its move to Rutherford in 1990.



Above: An article in the Maitland Mercury 25 June, 1976.

Accommodation Services

1981 - 1982

The number of new people with a disability seeking employment increased and in response the Mai-Wel Lodge was built some years later to accommodate those who worked in the workshop and lived in outlying areas.

Initially, in 1976 the association applied to build a hostel. It was refused because they lacked the funds to pay its share.

The South Street Special School was purchased by the government in January, 1977, and operated as South Street Public School. The sale of the school gave the association enough money to gain approval for the hostel project.

Funds were raised and the Mai-Wel Hostel was built on the South Street site, adjacent to the workshop. The hostel accommodation enabled people who were previously denied access to daily employment by distance or lack of suitable transport, to have a job.

Twenty years of planning and hard work saw the lodge come to fruition. The sale of the South Street School enabled the association to start building the hostel. The total cost of the project including furnishings,

roadwork, two buses for transportation and recreational facilities was approximately \$500,000. The association contributed \$100,000 with the government contributing money on a 4:1 basis.

Recreational facilities included table tennis tables, billiard tables and basketball rings.

Two sections of the hostel made up facilities for a total of 20 permanent residents and four spare rooms for occasional or emergency visitors.

Live-in house parents were employed to help guide the hostel's ultimate goal of helping residents achieve independence.

The opening of the Mai-Wel Lodge also coincided with the 20th anniversary of Mai-Wel. The Mai-Wel Hostel was officially opened by Mr Frank O'Keefe, Member for Paterson, on Saturday, 7 November, 1981.

The next challenge for Mai-Wel at this time was to expand the workshop's facilities to allow for more people to engage in meaningful employment. With 60 currently employed they envisaged another 60 entering the workshop facilities in the near future.

While the majority of members of Mai-Wel at that time had a child enrolled in the school, Mr and Mrs J Tucker were still actively involved after 20 years. They had no family connection to Mai-Wel.

You're all invited to Mai-Wel Hostel's official opening . . .

Opening of Mai-Wel hostel marks 20 years hard work



Above: Hostel official opening, 7 November, 1981.

Everyone welcome at celebrations

Maitland Branch of the Subnormal Children's Welfare Association hopes for a big public response to its invitation to celebrate the opening of its new hostel.

Everyone is welcome to help Mai-Wel celebrate two important events in its history—the official opening of Mai-Wel Lodge and its 20th year of service to the handicapped, this Saturday.

Celebrations will start at 2.45 pm at Mai-Wel in South Street, Telarah.

Left: Article
from Maitland
Mercury 6
November, 1981.

Goal is
a place
of
their own

Diversification

1983 - 1985

In 1983, Mai-Wel Industries Sheltered Workshop planned to expand employment opportunities for people with a disability through experimenting with new products including recycled paper brickettes and paper logs.

At this time, Mai-Wel's growth was mirrored by the fact there was 69 supported employees and had generated 90 tonnes of cardboard stockpiled ready for recycling.

The growth of the organisation and workforce presented the need for new facilities and extensions which Mai-Wel had been planning for two years prior.

Funds continued to be raised with Hunter Valley Sprint Racing Club presenting a cheque for \$630 to Mai-Wel Industries manager, Mr Robert Smith. A grant for \$38,000 was also received from the Maitland branch of the Sub-Normal Children's Welfare Association.

The funds provided a new lunch room and toilet facility area off part of the existing building at the South Street site.

The Hunter Development Board assisted Mai-Wel with the project through use of the Out-

of-Trade Apprentice Scheme. The total cost was \$48,000.

On the 6 June, 1983, 31 nurses from Stockton Hospital visited Mai-Wel sites (including the workshop, lodge and school) as part of their occupational therapy unit in a course they were undertaking. The aim of their visit was to look at the facilities available for *handicapped* people in the region.

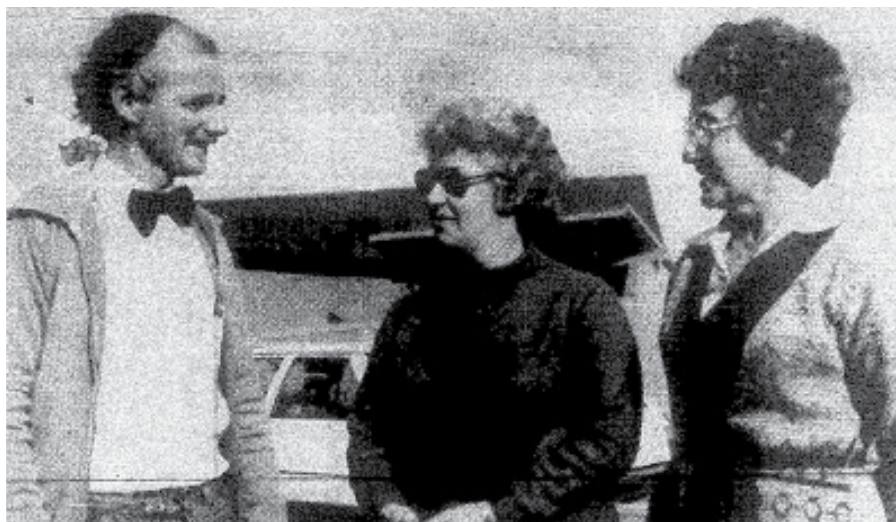
1983 represented a significant year in the reform of disability services and treatment of people with a disability.

The Richmond Report based on the idea of deinstitutionalisation, recommended moving people with a disability or mental health issue out of psychiatric wards and institutions to be cared for in the community.

It recommended that the NSW Government fund a system of community-based networks, backed up by specialist hospital and accommodation services. Mental hospitals were to be progressively reduced in size, and their services provided by general hospitals, supported accommodation and hostels, with the aim of integration and access.

The inaugural Mai-Wel Art Exhibition was launched at Pender Place Shopping Centre, Maitland, on 8 November, 1984, with the aim of fostering communication between the community and the *handicapped*.

Exhibiting artworks were available for sale with a percentage of each item going to Mai-Wel. Mrs Margaret Sivyver, (then director of Maitland City Art Gallery and current director of Mai-Wel) and Mrs C Chivers, of Morpeth, judged the competition. This was a new style of fundraising for the organisation and continued for many years to come.



■ Chief Executive Officer, Robert Smith, with Hunter Valley Sprint Racing Club secretary, Maureen Mordue, and treasurer, Elaine Fairhall, at the sheltered workshop yesterday.

Workshop to experiment with paper products

Above: Maitland Mercury article, 13 April, 1983.

Left: Maitland Mercury article, 5 August, 1983.

Below: Maitland Mercury article, 3 October, 1984.

Donation brings Mai-wel extensions closer

Top prizes for inaugural Mai-Wel art exhibition

Four prizes of \$200 each will be awarded to winners in the inaugural Mai-Wel Art Exhibition.

Mai-Wel Industries is conducting the exhibition from November 8 to 10 this year in conjunction with Hocking Studios. Mai-Wel hopes to make the exhibition an annual event.

Mr. Oliver Jones, spokesman for Mai-Wel, said it is hoped the exhibition will foster communication between the community and the handicapped.

The exhibition, at Pender Place shopping centre in Maitland, will have sections for traditional, water colour, modern and tapestry entries.

There's an entry fee of \$2 and the closing date for entries is October 25. Entry forms are available from Mai-Wel, South Street, Telarah, or Hocking Studios, Pender Place.

Member for Maitland, Mr. Allan Walsh, will officially open the exhibition at noon on Thursday, November 8.

Following the opening there'll be a wine and cheese tasting.

The paintings will be on view from 8.30 am to 9 pm on the Thursday and Friday, and from 8.30 am to 4 pm on the Saturday.

A percentage of each item sold will go to Mai-Wel. Director of Maitland City Art Gallery, Mrs. M. Sivyler, will judge the three painting sections and Mrs. C. Chivers of Morpeth, will judge the tapestry section.

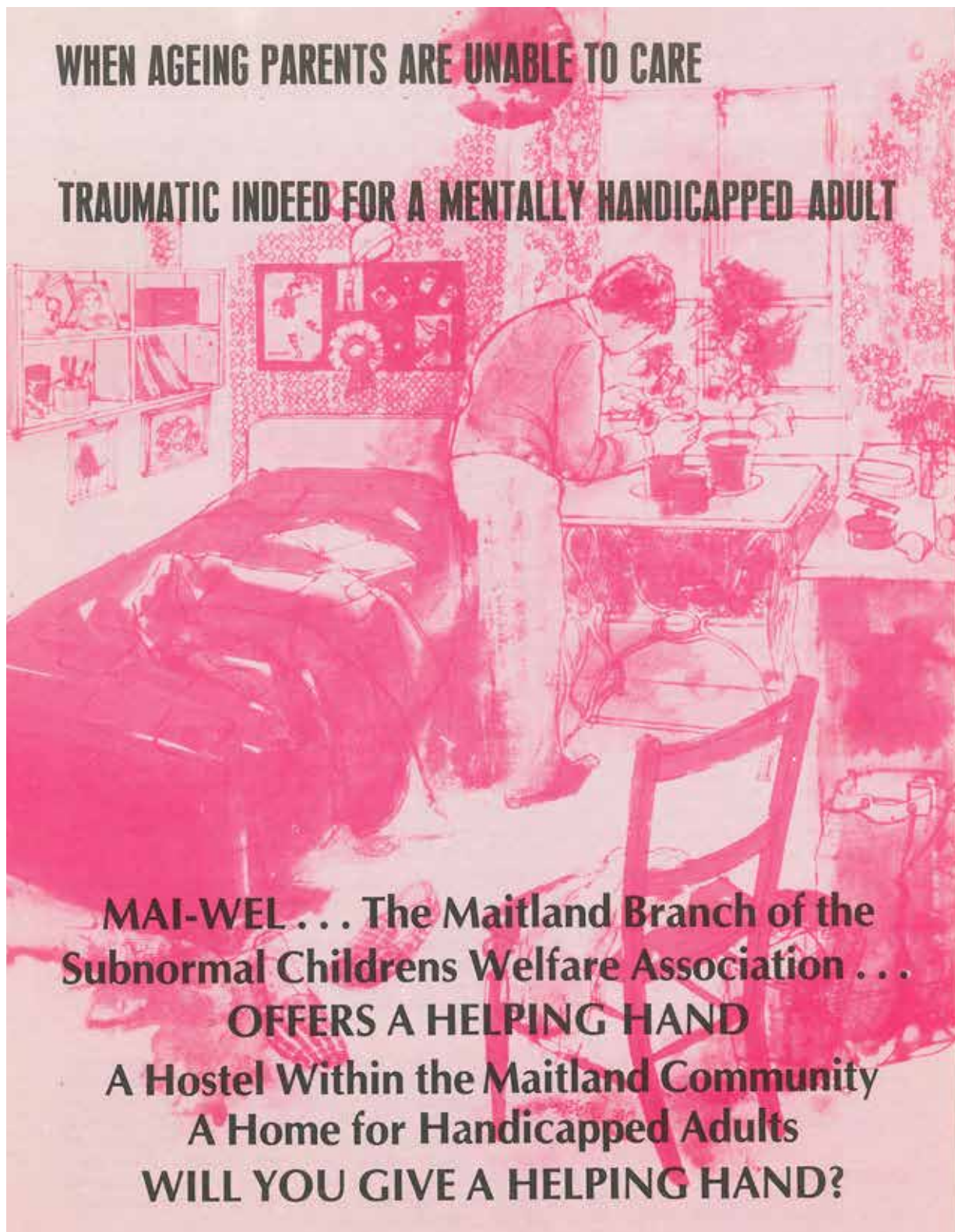
The prizes for each section have been donated by Maitland City Council, APT Properties Pty. Ltd. Pender Place and Maitland Mutual Building Society.

The development of a network of community based facilities for both the psychiatrically ill and developmentally disabled. This will involve small community residential houses for the developmentally disabled, and more hostels for the psychiatrically ill;

Above: An excerpt from 'Recommendations for the Richmond Report', written by Honourable L.J Brereton, M.P., 27 April, 1983.

Snapshot

A Snapshot in Time



WHEN AGEING PARENTS ARE UNABLE TO CARE

TRAUMATIC INDEED FOR A MENTALLY HANDICAPPED ADULT

**MAI-WEL . . . The Maitland Branch of the
Subnormal Childrens Welfare Association . . .
OFFERS A HELPING HAND**

**A Hostel Within the Maitland Community
A Home for Handicapped Adults
WILL YOU GIVE A HELPING HAND?**

Above: A Mai-Wel advertisement for the hostel

Study finds handicapped make good employees

A NEW study of the mentally handicapped has found that although many make valuable employees, ignorance and prejudice still prevent them getting jobs.

The study, by a Sydney students' group, the Northside Research Associates, found that the intellectually handicapped had much more of a chance of getting jobs on the open market than in the past.

Employers said they were punctual, loyal and trustworthy, and some regarded them as more valuable than so-called 'normal' employees.

But the NSW study, believed to be the first of its kind, said the stigma of being disabled remained, and many employers never thought of hiring handicapped people.

The chairman of Northside Research Associates, Mr Eric Love, said people generally believed that the mentally handicapped belonged in sheltered

workshops and that their chances of employment were nil.

'Our study found a case for the opposite,' he said.

'We found many examples of intellectually disabled people working in open employment.'

Mr Love said employers who had hired young people with an intellectual disability were generally very happy with their decision.

Positive image

'These employers found disabled workers made long-term and trustworthy employees because of their great sense of loyalty,' he said.

'They also found intellectually disabled people to be punctual and easy to get along with and they were characteristically highly regarded by employers.'

Despite the reports, the study found most employers had never

contemplated hiring an intellectually disabled person.

The study recommended that more should be done to promote a positive image of the disabled at work.

Even the parents of disabled generally did not look for jobs in open employment for their children, it said.

'Parents may be more motivated to do this if they are made aware of the wide range of job options already filled by intellectually disabled people and the positive attitude expressed by employers,' Mr Love said.

The report also recommended that schools play a more active role in developing the personal skills necessary for social compatibility in the workplace and the community.

The study was carried out by marketing students from North Sydney College of Technical and Further Education, and commissioned by NSW voluntary group the Challenge Foundation.



Above: "Study finds handicapped make good employees", article from the Maitland Mercury, 16 January, 1986.

Left: The Mai-Wel soccer team, 1981.

Changing Times

1986 - 1993

In 1986 Mai-Wel celebrated its Silver Jubilee for 25 years of service with a dinner.

In 1987 the Sub-Normal Children's Welfare Association changed its name to the Challenge Foundation. Then on 1 July, 1993, branches of the Challenge Foundation were given the option of either closing or becoming independent companies.

Mai-Wel chose to become an independent company from this date and registered as Mai-Wel Limited.

Fundraising initiatives continued with the annual fetes becoming a regular event for the Maitland community.

After many submissions, Mai-Wel was granted funding to commence an Enclave at Australian Poultry (Steggles Poultry at Beresfield). A group of employees with a disability were employed by Steggles and a support worker, who assisted them in their production role in Steggles boxing room, was provided by Mai-Wel.

In 1991, a new shed was erected to provide much needed space for the recycling division at South Street.

A welding and fabrication division was also established.

The organisation continued to grow, as new employment opportunities were made available. As a result, a lunch room, meeting room and toilet block were added to the site to allow for an extra 65 employees.

The extensions were made possible through support from the Hunter Development Board, under their Out-of-Trade Apprentice Training Scheme along with volunteer labour from Roy Dorn and business partner, Kenny Lawrence.

A room was dedicated to the late Roy Dorn, after he gave his time and skills to Mai-Wel, contributing substantially to the design, planning and development of the extensions. Roy was also a chairman of the workshop management committee in 1981 and 1982, when the building program was planned.

Challenge Foundation of New South Wales

Above: New name for the Sub-Normal Children's Welfare Association which Mai-Wel operated under until 1993.



Above: Mark Bowden in front of the new shed, 1991.



Above: The Mai-Wel Fete, 18 March, 1989.



Above: The Hon. Milton Morris (AO) with Mai-Wel board member, Mr Alan Everett.

Business Growth

1994 - 1999

In July 1994 Mai-Wel Limited submitted a transition plan to the Federal Department of Health and Family Services for upgrade to the highest level of compliance with the Disability Services Standards.

In 1994 and early 1995, Mai-Wel devolved from a centre-based *sheltered* workshop into separate business services located throughout the community.

These businesses grew and a range of new programs, and housing options were made available. Mai-Wel residents had the opportunity to choose from a range of flexible accommodation models.

Mai-Wel was successful in the application for funding from the Family and Community Services Department (now known as the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) to provide services to a broader range of people with disabilities through the provision of open employment services. The new division, Hunter LabourForce Solutions was established in 1994.

The success of the open employment program resulted in an increase in recurrent funding

which was made available in 1997 and 1998.

In 1997 Mai-Wel won accreditation to provide the Post School Options Program, funded by the Ageing and Disability Department (now known as the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care).

The success and expansion of each of these programs resulted in the need to relocate to larger premises. The Community Programs Division was established in refurbished premises at 282 High Street, Maitland.

The Employment Program was accommodated in professional offices at the front of a building at 2/14 Elgin Street, Maitland. The rear section was fitted out with a living skills and training area to accommodate the Post School Options Program.

That division of Mai-Wel provided a variety of fee for service programs, training and services for clients referred by a number of different sources including local high schools, Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, Probation and Parole Services and by families who require a service to support the person with a disability in their care.

Mai-Wel management continued to respond to the needs of people with disabilities. The TASC Program (Training Access Skills in the Community) was developed to provide productive, creative and recreational opportunities for people who are ageing and who have high support needs.

The Caroline Chisholm Cafe was opened in 1997. The cafe provided employment opportunities to people with a disability, who took a great deal of pride in their work and service to the community. In December 1997, the cafe won the CBD Customer Choice Awards and won the Service Category of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Small Business Awards.

WANT TO BUILD YOUR BUSINESS?
We can help you with
**TOP QUALITY PROMOTIONAL IDEAS
 AND PRODUCTS, TIMESAVING LABOUR
 IDEAS AND AFFORDABLE PRINTING**

- Name badges, Plaques, Coffee Mugs, Key Rings, Baseball Caps, Fridge Magnets and MANY MORE promotional ideas. Ring for a free quote.
- We can organise your mail outs from printing to delivery.
- We will count, weigh, package and shrinkwrap nearly any product.
- Full printing service - from T-copy to thousands!

Hunter Business TimeSavers
 539 High Street, Maitland
 Phone (02) 4933 2288



Above: An advertisement in the Newcastle Herald for Hunter Business TimeSavers, a division of Mai-Wel, 27 March, 1999.



Above: Brett Boyton working at the Caroline Chisholm Cafe.

Personnel & Training



Enhance your work teams and free up your highly skilled staff

Statistics show that people with a disability are more reliable, enthusiastic, willing and keen to learn and committed to achieving the desired results.

Hunter Labourforce Solutions offers:

- No Cost** Recruitment
- No Cost** Access to Government Incentive Schemes
- No Cost** Job Skills Training
- No Cost** Assistance to develop the Job Description
- No Cost** Productivity Based Wage Assessment
- No Cost** Ongoing Skills Development and Support
- No Hassle** Administration of setting up the job

Hunter LabourForce Solutions 

2/14 Elgin Street MAITLAND 2320
 Tel: (02) 4934 3144 Fax: (02) 4934 1475

Above: An advertisement for Hunter LabourForce Solutions, a division of The Mai-Wel Group.

Quality

Quality Service Provision

2000 - 2003

Commencing in the year 2000, Mai-Wel took a proactive approach to and became involved in a number of the initiatives of the Department of Family and Community Services, which would frame the future of disability services funded by the federal government in the future.

A new Quality Assurance (QA) System for disability services underwent trials. Mai-Wel was one of very few disability organisations (only 21 services nationally) to be involved.

QA Accreditation determined eligibility for future funding for business services (now known as Australian Disability Enterprises) and Open Employment from the year 2004. Without the certification, ongoing or new funding would not be forthcoming.

Mai-Wel achieved QA Accreditation in August 2002, the first business service in New South Wales to be accredited.

Case-based funding replaced the block grant system after a number of trials of the new funding system began in 2000. Mai-Wel's involvement and success in the trial resulted in growth funding.

A number of new supported employees to the business services and clients to the open employment services were employed with new growth funding places.

In March 2002, once again in response to client needs, the Mai-Wel Respite Centre was opened. This service was created to provide living skills training and quality leisure options to people living at home, particularly those living with aged carers. The centre is on the west end of Mai-Wel Lodge and was fitted out to create a bright and welcoming environment.

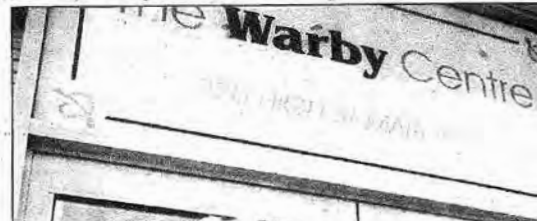
The funding to fit-out the centre was provided by funds raised by the Mai-Wel Auxiliary at the retail outlet, the Mai-Wel Opportunity Shop at Rutherford shopping centre.

The expansion of services required the purchase of new buildings to house the additional staff and clients of new programs. Two buildings were purchased which had previously accommodated athletes during the 2000 Olympics.

One building is now fitted out for use by the Outreach Program and the other is used as a training and living skills facility.

Another property was purchased at 220 High Street, Maitland. This modern well appointed brick building was designated for use by the ATLAS Post School Options program and the Community Access and Day Programs. The building was officially opened in September, 2003, by the Minister for Ageing and Disabilities, Ms Carmel Tebbutt. The building was named The Warby Centre in recognition of the years of work and devotion to Mai-Wel by members Gordon and Nola Warby, and particularly for the couple's contribution to the Mai-Wel Opportunity Shop.

Warby Centre opens its doors



Above: The Warby Centre opening, Maitland Mercury 23 September, 2003.



Above: The Warby Centre, 220 High Street, Maitland.

MaiWel looks back on 40 years of service

Above: Mai-Wel celebrates 40 years of service, 2000.



Above: Glenn and Nola Warby cutting the cake at the opening of the Warby Centre, 22 September, 2003.

The future

Looking to the Future

2004 - 2006

In the pursuit of continuous improvement and best practice, Mai-Wel became reaccredited as a Registered Training Organisation in 2004. This enabled the organisation to offer its staff and others, accredited training in Certificate III and IV Disability Work. A large number of staff embraced the opportunity to complete an in-house traineeship in Certificate IV Disability Work.

Application to vary the scope of training provided was completed in 2004 which increased the number of courses offered to include, Certificate IV Frontline Management, Certificates III and IV Aged Care, Certificates I and II General Construction, Certificate II Engineering and Production and Certificate I Engineering.

During 2004, the State Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care restructured the ATLAS programs and developed two new groups catering for the specific needs of the participants.

The Transition to Work Program was designed for school leavers who had been assessed as able in the future to be employed. The Community Participation Program (sister program) was designed for young people who

were leaving school, who had high support needs and were unlikely to have the ability and capacity to be employed.

The Mai-Wel administration building benefited from a major upgrade and expansion during the latter part of 2004. This upgrade saw the building enlarged to accommodate five new offices, reception and administrative staff areas, a new staff lunch room, training room and a re-fit of the older bathrooms and employee lunchroom. In addition, a large workroom and awning were built onto the back of the building to accommodate the Enterprise Centre.

A new fundraising initiative and event for the Maitland community, the Celebrity Comedy Debate was established in 2005 to raise funds for a multi-purpose community centre on Mai-Wel land fronting John Street, Telarah. The inaugural event was held on Saturday 18th June, 2005 and was well received by the local community. As a result this event will celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2014.

CIMSability, a client management system was developed and introduced in 2006 with the aim of streamlining extensive daily reporting processes, while meeting audit and funding

requirements.

CIMSability was created with software development partner, Liveware Solutions, and executive manager of quality assurance at Mai-Wel, Anne Hodgson.

The system is also available to other disability service providers, similar to Mai-Wel across Australia.

In May, 2006, Mai-Wel designed an innovative program, Life Matters – Live Now, Plan for Later, to provide much needed support and educational opportunities for carers with long term caring responsibilities for adults with a disability. This program was enthusiastically received by carers who enjoyed a wide variety of activities and training.

In the same year, Mai-Wel successfully tendered for a new program, Achieve Employment, to provide services to a different jobseeker client group than previously supported. This client group are those who would be able to achieve independence within two years. Staff assisted clients with job search, assessments, training and post placement support.



Above: Mai-Wel became reaccredited as a registered training organisation in 2004.

THE MAI-WEL GROUP CELEBRITY DEBATE
SATURDAY 18TH JUNE • MAITLAND TOWN HALL
 DOORS 6.15pm FOR 7pm START

▶ Featuring
Jean Kittson and Mikey Robbins
 as well as local personalities including Aaron Kearney, Tony Linnane & Ian Gollan.
 Adjudicators - The Hon. Milton Morris and Mayor of Maitland Peter Blackmore.

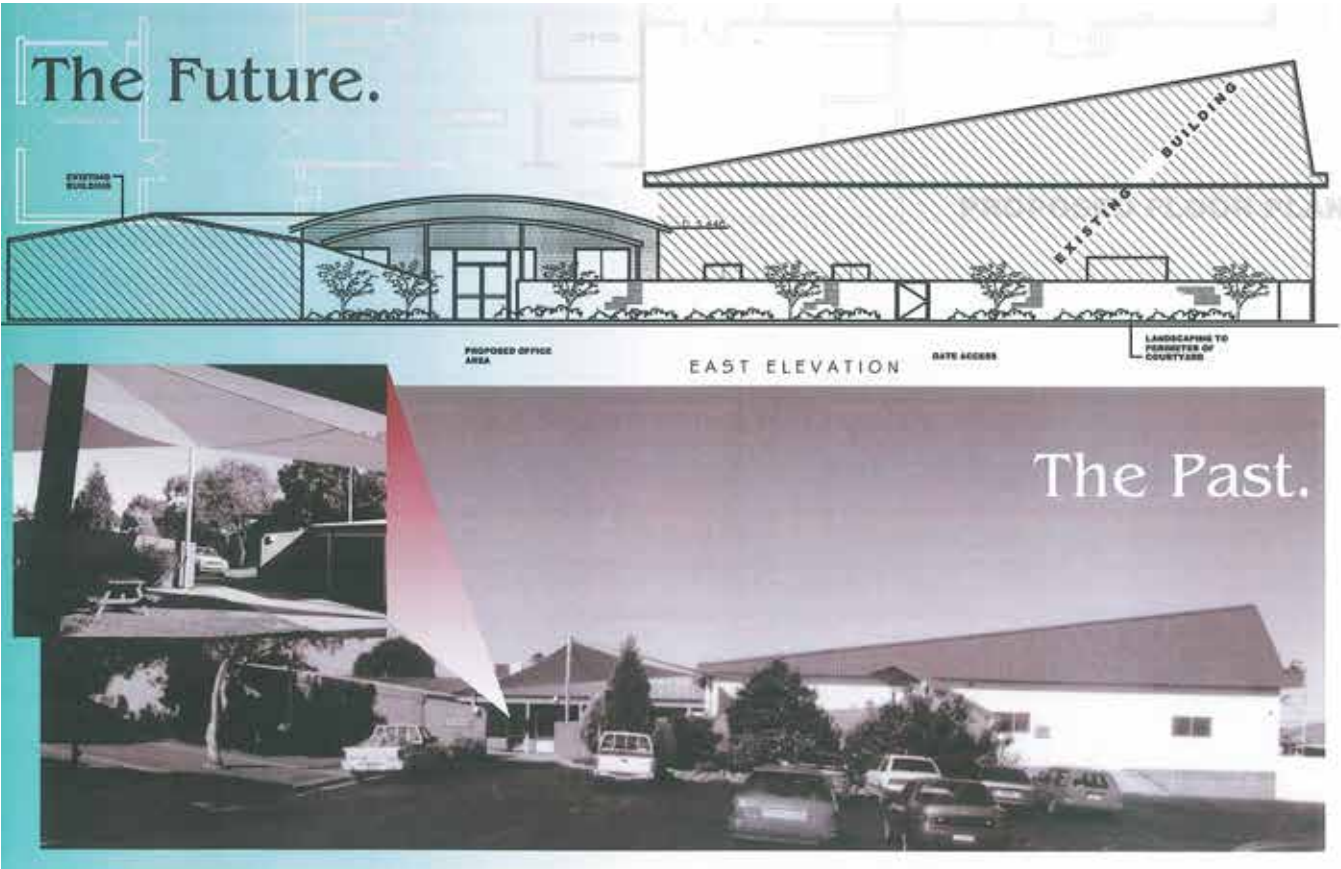
TICKETS -
GOLD - \$45 per person includes light supper with debaters following the event and seats located in the first five rows.
SILVER - \$25 per person (Seating is NOT reserved.)

To book your tickets, telephone Ingrid at Mai-Wel on 4932 8599
 All funds raised go towards a purpose built facility for the Mai-Wel Group.

With thanks to: Everet Management and Publicity

Accommodation Supporters -
 The Old George and Dragon Guesthouse, East Maitland and The Cumberland Motel Cessnock

Above: The first Celebrity Comedy Debate flyer, 2005.



Above: Building expansions as shown on the cover of the 2003-2004 Annual Report.

Innovation

2007 - 2009

To manage the growth of Mai-Wel, an analysis of the company's board of directors skills, qualifications and strengths occurred. As a result of this, sub-committees were developed to utilise these skills and focus on specific projects for the organisation.

Many original individuals were still with Mai-Wel, and this placed an emphasis on the organisation's ability to meet their needs as they aged. For this reason, a focus was placed on recreation and accommodation services for the ageing.

Future planning and business expansions continued with Achieve Employment, a division of Mai-Wel, moving into new premises in High Street, Maitland. This new building housed Hunter LabourForce Solutions and the Transition to Work Program.

Plans and fundraising for a multi-purpose centre on land owned in John Street, Telarah, continued with numerous approaches made to various government departments for additional funding.

International Day of People with a Disability (IDPwD) is a United Nations sanctioned day that aims to promote an understanding

of people with disability and encourage support for their dignity, rights and well-being. Mai-Wel celebrated IDPwD on 2008 with a breakfast for local employers with guest speaker Kurt Fearnley, OAM and three-time paralympic gold medallist.

The Mai-Wel Group's Supported Holidays Program commenced in May, 2007 with a holiday to New Zealand with seven clients. The program continues to offer a variety of experiences for clients including trips to Sydney, the Gold Coast, Tasmania, Nelson Bay, various cruises and New Zealand.

The Supported Holidays Program is offered to all supported employees and clients to assist them to maintain a work life balance, enhance opportunities for new experiences and provide a holiday for people without their families, which provides independence for them and respite for carers.



Above: Kurt Fearnley, OAM at a Mai-Wel event in 2008.



Above: Greg, Amy and Elaine on a Supported Holiday in 2007.



Above: A Supported Holiday to Tasmania in 2008.

50 Years

Celebrating 50 Years

2010 - 2011

The Mai-Wel Group launched their 50th anniversary celebrations on Wednesday 12th May, 2010, at Maitland Regional Art Gallery.

Reaching 50 years of operation is a significant achievement for any organisation and to celebrate this special milestone, The Mai-Wel Group held a range of events during 2010/2011 recognising the past, present and future of The Mai-Wel Group.

The celebrations also recognised and highlighted the significant involvement of many people over the years starting with the 50th anniversary launch. The Celebrity Comedy Debate followed by a Client Celebration, Play-Wel for Mai-Wel, an ecumenical church service and the inaugural Gala Ball.

Along with the above events, the 50th anniversary celebrations also included a research project which captured a more comprehensive knowledge of Mai-Wel's history and engaged a wider group of people from the community including supporters, people from past years and their families.

In 2010 The Mai-Wel Group's largest ever building project was

realised, after five years of fundraising efforts (including the introduction of the annual Celebrity Comedy Debate).

A common theme with Mai-Wel's growth throughout the years, has been the need to expand buildings and seek new premises as a result of more people with a disability accessing services.

The dream of a Mai-Wel Community Centre, was realised which would allow the organisation to increase service capacity over time. The centre at 23 John Street, Telarah features a purpose built layout, sensory rooms and gardens, personal care rooms, delightful indoor and outdoor space and ample parking.

Like other Mai-Wel projects, the building was made possible with thanks to generous community and business support, including principle Hilton Grugeon AM, Wayne Brown and GWH Group, along with Jeff Kerr and Stuart Jones who supervised the project.

During 2010, four units were built in Walter Street, Rutherford, which has created a quality home environment, accommodating five residents.

On the 11th November, 2011, the Mai-Wel community centre

was officially opened by Mr Simon McKeon, Australian of the Year 2011.

A plaque was revealed for the new Warby Centre, within the community centre, which is home to the COMETS Program.



Above: L-R: Jan Whyte (vice president), Paul Callinan (vice president), Jennifer Leslie (Hon. treasurer), Graham Burns (president), Pennie Kearney (CEO), Kevin Gordon (director) and Margaret Sivyer (director) enjoying the 2011 Gala Ball.



Above: Some of the original students from the school with Julia Sharpe, teacher, at the 50th anniversary launch.



Above: The 50th anniversary logo.



Above: The newly constructed Walter Street units.



Above: The Mai-Wel Community Centre, 23 John Street, Telarah.

New World

New World of Disability Services

2012 - 2014

In 2012, The Mai-Wel Group began campaigning for the Every Australian Counts Campaign, demanding the introduction of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The NDIS was devised and recommended by the Productivity Commission in July, 2011, following an intensive 18-month investigation of the unmet needs of people with disability and their families and carers across Australia, and analysis of high-functioning disability support systems overseas.

The scheme was supported by government and introduced in the Newcastle region on 1 July, 2013. In 2014, Mai-Wel is planning for the Maitland launch of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in July 2015.

While the scheme represents a change in environment, Mai-Wel is confident that management and staff are ready and committed to meeting the demands of those changes.

Considerable work was done by Mai-Wel in a remarkably short time to ensure the organisation is in a position to meet the needs of NDIS participants including: a

new office space in Charlestown, implementation of a Change Management Committee, quantified staff skills, person-centred planning training for the leadership team and staff, provided NDIS transition workshops to people with a disability and their families and development of a conversation starter tool to assist participants and their carers to transition.

The Mai-Wel Group is currently fundraising for a Domestic Skills House, which will provide people with a disability, who want to become more independent, a realistic experience of living away from home.

The Mai-Wel Group has three annual fundraising events which help provide much needed funds and raise the profile of the organisation in the community. These events include; a Gala Ball, Celebrity Comedy Debate and Play-Wel for Mai-Wel (corporate sports day). Mai-Wel is immensely fortunate to have the support of the community and businesses alike.

Commencing in 2012, Mai-Wel had involvement with the Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) Large Residential Centre Redevelopment Project.

This Project, later referred to as the Urban Living Project, involved future planning and development of Mai-Wel's large residential centre, the lodge. In line with ADHC's commitment to eliminate all LRC's, it is proposed that the lodge be devolved and homes or units across the Maitland area be built to accommodate residents.



Above: Greg and Derek at an Every Australian Counts event, 2012.



Above: Steve and Brendon on a fishing trip, 2012.



Above: Gwen and Kelli at the community centre, 2012.



Above: Supported holiday to Uluru in 2013.

Scheme a milestone for people living with disabilities

Above: The Maitland Mercury, 7 December, 2012.

Support

How You Can Help

The Mai-Wel Group is a registered charity thus fundraising and donations are imperative to the ongoing success of the organisation.

Volunteer with us

The Mai-Wel Group offers many volunteering opportunities that could enhance your life and those of the Mai-Wel community. We offer flexible volunteering opportunities - various days and hours across the week with a wide variety of programs including; small to large group activities, site based or in the community, from cooking to fishing to swimming to craft, from a business environment to supported holidays or a day trip.

We value the time, skills and experience that volunteers provide to our clients and staff. Our hope is that by volunteering, individuals will have fun, learn new skills, gain valuable work experience, meet new people and feel they are contributing in a way that is of value to both them and the person with a disability.

If you are interested in finding out more please contact the Volunteer Coordinator on (02) 4932 8599 or email hr@maiwel.com.au.

Give regularly

The Mai-Wel Group welcomes all levels of donation; whether it's a

one-off gift, a monthly donation or the establishment of a corporate sponsorship.

For additional information about making a donation, please contact The Mai-Wel Group on (02) 4932 8599 or email donations@maiwel.com.au.

Visit us online

Visit www.maiwel.com.au to stay informed, be involved and make a difference in the lives of people with a disability.

Remember us in your Will

For Mai-Wel to thrive in the future we will continue to rely on community support. You can show your support by leaving a bequest to The Mai-Wel Group. Your gift, however large or small, will enhance our organisation's ability to provide opportunity and choice to people with a disability. For more information or if you would like to meet with us to plan your bequest please contact The Mai-Wel Group on (02) 4932 8599.

Attend an event

Mai-Wel events not only provide the community with quality, local events but they raise the profile of the organisation and much needed funds for our programs and services. You can support The Mai-Wel Group by attending these events and

promoting them to friends and family.

The Mai-Wel Group holds several major fundraising events each year including:

- The Celebrity Comedy Debate
- Play-Wel for Mai-Wel
- Annual Gala Ball

In addition, several other events are held across the organisation to celebrate special occasions and involve the wider community including International Day of People with a Disability, Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, Volunteers Week celebrations, Carers Week and The Mai-Wel Group christmas party.

To ensure you don't miss out on any of Mai-Wel's events contact the Communications & Corporate Identity team on events@maiwel.com.au or (02) 4932 8599 to add your details to the mailing list to ensure you receive information about upcoming events at Mai-Wel.

Acknowledge

Acknowledgements

The Mai-Wel Group would like to pay dedication and respect to the following people who were instrumental in the establishment of The Mai-Wel Group:

- *Milton Morris AO (sole patron)*
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- *Elsa (Kay) Sharp AM*
- *Ray Dorn*
- *Kenny Lawrence*
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- *Mr Smith*
- *Edna Heslop*
- *Joyce Gibbs*
- *Norma Tucker*
- *Betty Boughton*
- *Mrs Strowther*
- *Mrs Rose*
- *Mrs Bignell*
- *Margaret Munton*
- *Bert Greedy*

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- *Newcastle Sub-Normal Children's Association*
- *Maitland Lions Club*
- *East Maitland Lions Club*
- *Telarah Bachelor Boys*
- *Maitland Apex Club*
- *Vestry of St Luke's Church of England*
- *The Maitland Mercury*
- *Angel Inn Social Club*
- *Hunter Valley Sprint Racing Club*
- *Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs*

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Timeline

Mai-Wel 50 Year Timeline

Nov 1960 - parents met and discussed their concerns regarding their children with a disability

12th May 1961 - First official meeting of Mai-Wel

March 1964 - Mai-Wel School opened in South Street, Telarah



1972 - Mai-Wel Industries, a sheltered workshop, was established

Sept 1981 - The Mai-Wel Lodge was constructed to provide accommodation for employees who lived in outlying areas



Sept 1991 - Enclave established at Steggles (Baiada)

Oct 1994 - Specialist Employment Network, Hunter LabourForce Solutions was established



Nov 1994 - Mai-Wel sheltered workshop devolved into three separate businesses (PACE Setters, TimeSavers & Hunter Grounds & Gardens)

1997 - Caroline Chisholm Cafe opened

1997 - Post School Options Program established



July 2001 - Another Mai-Wel business, The Enterprise Centre, was established

Jan 2003 - Mai-Wel Day Programs commenced across the Hunter

2004 - Mai-Wel becomes a Registered Training Organisation



2009 - Mai-Wel E-Cycling Services established

2010 - Mai-Wel Community Centre constructed

12th May 2011 - Mai-Wel celebrates its 50th Anniversary



Logo Evolution



SUB-NORMAL CHILDREN'S WELFARE ASSOCIATION

Challenge Foundation of New South Wales



1962

6th February, 1962 the Maitland branch of the Sub-Normal Children's Welfare Association was formed.

1984

The Sub-Normal Children's Welfare Association changed its name to Challenge Foundation.

1993

On 1 July 1993 branches of the Challenge Foundation were given the option of either closing or becoming independent companies. Mai-Wel chose to become an independent company from this date.

2004

A new logo was introduced to highlight Mai-Wel's mission of providing *access, integration and opportunity for all*.

2007

Mai-Wel's mission and vision changed in alignment with the organisation's strategic plan and as a result the tagline 'Advancing the Lives of People with a Disability' was added to the logo.

2010

A new logo for the 50th Anniversary Celebrations was released on the 12th May 2010 and used for a year.

2013

With the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and a new world of disability service provision, Mai-Wel's vision and mission statement was changed. The new look logo is a reflection of this.



Australian Government

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