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PRESS RELEASE

SMALL COMMUNITY-LED CENTRES ACROSS WA HOST EVENTS TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

This May 6 – 12, Western Australians right across the State can look forward to a wonderful week of events during Neighbourhood Centre Week: open days; movie, trivia and board game nights; community breakfasts, lunches and high teas; and more.

This year’s theme Bringing People Together - from your Neighbourhood to your Nation highlights how Centres work at the heart of their communities offering activities, programs and services that support the objectives of social inclusion and address factors that can lead to social exclusion: in short, they bring people together, help combat loneliness and provide the human connection that is so vital to health and wellbeing.

“Centres offer welcoming, safe and non-judgmental places where people of all ages, ethnicity, gender or religion can feel a part of something, gather, connect, learn and grow.” says Jane Chilcott, Linkwest CEO. “This is so important in a society where feelings of disconnectedness are increasingly common, and can assist in the prevention of many of the social issues that disconnectedness can manifest: drug use; depression; anti-social behaviour and crime.”

The majority of the events happening across WA have been made possible due to grant funding from Linkwest’s Neighbourhood Centre Week 2019 Small Grant program, which in turn, is due to generous support from Lotterywest.

A calendar of WA-based Neighbourhood Centre Week events can be viewed at: https://www.neighbourhoodhouseweek.com/events-in-western-australia-2019

Manjimup Family Centre to kick-off NCW with a three-point celebration

In true community-led, not-for-profit style, Manjimup Family Centre is making the most of an opportunity, and combining three celebrations into one big, multicultural event:

- The launch of Neighbourhood Centre Week
- The grand opening of the Centre’s $267,000 building extension, and
- Fond farewells to Andre Foulon, who has ably been at the helm of the Centre for nearly 25 years.

The event will start at 1pm with a mix and mingle luncheon featuring delicious finger food prepared by seven volunteer chefs from Manjimup’s culturally and ethnically diverse communities.

“Once people are sated and settled,” said outgoing Centre Coordinator, Andre Foulon, “there will be a
short ceremony featuring addresses from select community leaders and the official ribbon cutting.”

Guests will be taken on a tour of the new building and share some celebratory cake while watching a retrospective slide show about the many initiatives and services the Centre has contributed to the community.

“It spans more than my 24 ½ years here,” said Andre, “and people will spot many familiar faces, including themselves and friends, younger and back in the day.”

This celebration is happening:

- **Date:** Friday 3 May
- **Time:** 1.00pm – 3.00pm
- **Location:** Manjimup Family Centre, 13 Mount St Manjimup.

Dignitaries who have confirmed their attendance include:

- Representative for Minister Hon Simone McGurk (Hon Adele Farina)
- Paul Omodei, Manjimup Shire President
- Gail Ipsen Cutts, Director Community Services, Shire of Manjimup
- Hon Terry Redman MLA
- Nelson Blake-Gilmore (Greens)
- John Hassel (Labor)
- Dellys Sice, Chair Manjimup Family Centre

+++ End +++

For more information about Neighbourhood Centre Week contact:

Linkwest CEO Jane Chilcott  
[jane.chilcott@linkwest.asn.au](mailto:jane.chilcott@linkwest.asn.au)  
(08) 9485 8929  
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For more information about the NCW launch event contact:

Manjimup Family Centre Coordinator Andre Foulon / Ruth Philips  
[mjpfc@westnet.com.au](mailto:mjpfc@westnet.com.au)  
(08) 9771 1653 (M-F 10.00am – 5.00pm)  
(08) 9772 1327 (After Hours and P Hols)
BACKGROUND: NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE SECTOR

Right across Western Australia, there are dedicated community spaces that provide a friendly, welcoming place where local people can meet to learn, gain new skills, make friends and feel part of their community. They also provide a safe, affordable space for playgroups, community and support groups to gather. We call these places Neighbourhood Centres, although they can be known by many names: Family Centres, Learning Centres, Community Centres, and Community Resource Centres.

Most are community managed not-for-profits, and some are council run. While each Centre is unique, reflecting the needs and aspirations of their local community, all are local and welcoming to everyone. People who attend their local Centre tend to be happier, more optimistic, have increased emotional wellbeing, and are more connected. All of which makes for stronger, healthier communities.

A few stats:

- There are around 160 Centres across WA (130 are Linkwest members).
- Around 150 people use each Centre per week = 27,000 users each week, or approx. 1.4 million people per year.
- Top 3 reasons people access their Centre: Information and referral, community events/festivals/markets, and arts and crafts.
- Top 3 demographic groups: Older (65yrs+), low income and people looking for employment.
- On average, 6 external groups and services use Centres as places to meet and/or outreach to the community e.g. self-help support groups, social e.g. gardens, NFPs, government, health and medical, spiritual etc.
- On average, each Centre partners with 7 other groups / organisations per month to deliver projects and services to their community.

BACKGROUND: LINKWEST

Nedlands-based Linkwest is a small not-for-profit organisation that is largely funded by the State Government’s Department of Communities and the Department for Primary Industries and Regional Development.

Linkwest is the Western Australian Peak Body for Neighbourhood and Community Resource Centres. Linkwest develops the capacity of 160 regional, remote, and metropolitan Centres, which in turn build the capacity of communities by providing employment and volunteering opportunities; training and education; and other services to individuals, families, and businesses. Linkwest has been empowering WA communities since 1982 through our network of 160 Neighbourhood and regional Community Resource Centres.

We pride ourselves on being knowledgeable of the needs and interests of small NFPs, and experts in providing solutions that support thriving communities. Our expertise in governance, people management, and community engagement have ensured the sustainability of community-led organisations that are critical to the communities they serve. A small, agile organisation, Linkwest is leading big conversations on
the value of strength-based, locally run services to the development of healthy communities, families, and individuals.

Former Premier of Western Australia, Professor Carmen Lawrence, is Linkwest’s official patron. She has been a patron for the past five years.

http://www.linkwest.asn.au/

Jane Chilcott, Linkwest CEO
Jane Chilcott, CEO of Linkwest since 2011, has been instrumental in re-establishing the peak organisation’s focus and commitment to small, locally managed centres and not-for-profits. Jane is passionate about the values underpinning the sector and the greater societal benefits our members contribute towards. A champion of strength based, community-led services both on a state and national level, her leadership has placed our members on the agenda for essential policy and reform initiatives.

BACKGROUND: MANJIMUP FAMILY CENTRE
The Manjimup Family Centre began its life at the coal face of the local community in February 1978 as a mobile toy and resource service supporting playgroups in Manjimup, Pemberton, Northcliffe and Walpole. It has over the years expanded its services to include occasional care, lifestyle and self-development groups, parenting and family support, multi award winning Early Years development groups, opportunities for seniors to stay healthy and connected and much more.

https://www.facebook.com/ManjimupFamilyCentre/

Andre Foulon, Manjimup Family Centre Coordinator
Andre’s “kaleidoscopic” background includes medical and science studies, photojournalism, travel writer, underwater photographer, editor of Europe’s biggest diving magazine, country newspaper editor, owner builder, home maker and single parent. He joined the Manjimup Family Centre in January 1995 as coordinator. “That year as a house husband”, he says, “was what landed me the job”.

Andre has since been able to tap into many other experiences of his in following the community’s changing needs. Notable examples include a men’s group, Manjimup Photo Club, multi award winning youth service Bands@Manjimup, online safety courses, IT training for indigenous people, foreign language movie clubs and audio-visual services for community events.

For his work, Andre has won a list of awards too long to mention here. Some examples are: Two WA Adult Learners Week Awards (2008 and 2009), 2016 Regional Achievement Awards – Community Service, 2016 Australian Not-For-Profit Technology Awards – Lifetime Achievements, 2019 Australia Day Community Citizen of the Year Award.

After 24 ½ years at the helm of Manjimup Family Centre, Andre will hand over to his successor, Ruth Phillips. “Ruth and I have worked towards this over the past six years”, he said, “and I know the Centre is in good hands.”