



australian labyrinth
network inc.

Report from ALN Chair 2021-2022.

Elizabeth Schiemer. Port Stephens

2021 could be called *annus horribilis* as global fear caused such significant personal, emotional and financial problems for almost everyone, yet the ALN continued to network and build support in 2021 and plans are off to a good start in 2022.

Those who have read my monthly News from the Chair have been kept regularly informed about what has been happening in labyrinths across Australia.

Thanks to Secretary Joy Bowles, the lynchpin who made things work, there are now resources on our website with guidelines on how to build a community Labyrinth and answers to questions asked by newcomers. Joy will be stepping down from her role as Secretary, to pursue her online education business as an aromatherapy science educator but will still be available on Council to help with the website and the Newsreel.

Many thanks to Treasurer Jim Bright, who faced his own trials and tribulations, yet managed to keep a close watch and report on finances. Jim has many years of experience as a board member of several community organisation and as editor of the Hunter Community Arts magazine. An Electronic and communication technician and a Drug and Alcohol counsellor he has received awards for Outstanding Voluntary Service to the Newcastle Community, certificates of appreciation from Family Drug Support and the Commonwealth Bank Not-for Profit Treasurers Award in 2018.

Thanks also to Mark Healy, Vice Chair and Regional Rep leader. This master landscape gardener and creator of fine wood finger labyrinths has been there when we needed him and added wisdom and support we could not do without. Congratulations Mark for promoting and achieving the labyrinth project at Hobart Prison.

Regional group activities. Southeast Queensland hub has been the most active regional group thanks to Randal and Sue Dennings, who did it all at the same time

they kept family together, and Misha Crosbie M.Ed. and Jessica Fleming M.M.H from *Soul Path Journeys* who have held regular events.

Randal Dennings, who chairs the University of Queensland's (UQ) Law School Pro Bono Centre and is a regular lecturer for the Law School, and an Adjunct Professor of the University of Queensland's schools of Business and Law, is the ALN volunteer solicitor who has provided valuable legal support and ensured the insurance suited all ALN requirements

Labyrinths For Social and Emotional Learning has emerged thanks to Louise Mason, former School Principal, Consultant Educator, Professional Development Facilitator and Learning Designer and Trainer at Enodatio in South Australia. Her small working group has steadily been building the wealth of material now freely available on the ALN website. Louise and her working group, comprised of multi-skilled educators and social workers, also wrote new material for World Labyrinth Day in Education Settings for 2022, *Hearts, Hands, Heads & Feet for Peace*, now available on the web site.

Louise welcomed Angelo Virgona to her team. Ange has been a long-time educational consultant in Faith Formation and Spirituality and his expertise and unique creativity has enabled schools, throughout the Archdiocese of Melbourne, the opportunity to enhance the depth and quality of their provision of Religious Education and Faith Development. Ange has worked with principals in spirituality/faith formation and led pilgrimages to Ireland and of course he found the labyrinth at Chartres. Thank you Ange for adding your considerable skills to this project.

Award winning author Amanda Lohrey, who won the Miles Franklin Award for "The Labyrinth," increased awareness of labyrinths. Heather Middleton PhD. Sociology, a Social Researcher and Evaluator, University of Sydney, prepared smart posters to use in libraries alongside the book. These have been uploaded to the ALN web site. Heather was supported by Kim Adele who has Masters degrees in Social Science (Counselling) and Special and Inclusive Education supported by qualifications in Art therapy, Dance Therapy and Counselling.

Heather Middleton, PhD, also made three long journeys from the Central Coast to present a workshop at Hunter Botanical Gardens and to attend exhibition tables at a Mind Body Festival at The Station in Newcastle and a health and wellness exhibition at Port Stephens during my time on Council. Thanks Heather for your efforts to spread the love of the labyrinth in the Hunter. We made contact with Ruth Boydell from Spiritual Care Australia and heard of her desire to foster and facilitate a labyrinth at The John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle.

Facilitator Training Discussions between Veriditas Teacher Trainers, Heather Middleton. Sue Thomas. Christina Rowntree and Tina Christensen and Veriditas Founder the Reverend Dr Lauren Artress and Executive Director Dawn Matheny, Ph.D. at Veriditas about a Memorandum of Understanding MOU for Facilitator Training is almost ready to start rolling ALN volunteer solicitor Randal Dennings

posed a few legal questions that need clarification to ensure smooth sailing into 2022.

Labyrinth Lovers' Newsreel On Zoom introduced by Tina Christensen, creative arts psychotherapist and SoulCollage® facilitator, was a huge learning curve for the small team who embarked on that endeavour. We would have been floundering without Joy Bowles putting hours into teaching us how to use Zoom. The initial flurry of programs dwindled as participants became aware of how much of a commitment of time regular presentations required. But it is a valuable way of communicating and promoting the many aspects of the labyrinth that I hope will be carried forward by the new Council.

The training and experience gave confidence to the proposal to make the *Gathering in 2022* a hybrid event on Zoom and in person. 2020 ALN chair, marriage celebrant, Immanuel Creagh a member of the Classical Guitar Corner Academy and wife Viviana as treasurer, left a great legacy of organisation that was the foundation for the *Gathering at Mt Carmel*. Guest speaker, author of *The Labyrinth Your Path to Self-Discovery* and spiritual healer. *Tony Christie* has adapted his presentation to a live Zoom from Ireland plus a prepared presentation.

Find a Facilitator. All qualified Labyrinth Facilitators have been invited to submit their CV for inclusion in this menu that helps people find qualified Labyrinth facilitators. This has started with registrations at <https://aln.org.au/page-18147>

ALN welcomed Julie Grogan onto the board after she responded to the survey with interest and enthusiasm. Julie brings experience in Change Management, Team Building, Corporate Training, and Life Coaching. She retired from Engineering to Serenity Farm in the Yarra Valley. Julie's extensive management skills will become a greater asset to ALN when her wings have unfolded.

Founding Members Lorraine and Geoff Rodda continued to effectively maintain the *Labyrinth Locator* which is such a valuable resource. Lorraine has also made a significant contribution to Labyrinths in Educational Settings Working Group and the promotion of Aboriginal reconciliation.

Art Exhibition. Louise Mason and fellow ALN member, Carol Schroeder, put significant effort into the Labyrinth Art Exhibition at Linhay Art Gallery in SA. I am very happy to have been able to purchase an art piece from that collection, Garden Meditation by Janet Pfeiffer.

Louise Mason and I have corresponded with Chris Katzenmeyer of the Legacy Labyrinth Project and hopefully started the ball rolling out legacy labyrinths in Australia with interest generated with new owners of Campfire in the Heart at Alice Springs, the Dean of Brisbane Cathedral and Lorraine Rodda. Jessica Fleming received an excited report from NZ who wanted to be included.

<https://www.legacylabyrinthproject.org/>

I subscribed to the webinar *The Big Connection Project 2021 Results* with Chris Katzenmeyer and Jocelyn McGee PhD. of Bayer University hosted by Rev Dr. Lauren Artress. Results will be posted online asap.

Louise Mason and I have also been talking with World Labyrinth Day organisers and I attended the web discussion with the promotion team to discuss the promotion of the 14th Annual World Labyrinth Day Saturday May 7th when people around the globe are invited to participate in this moving meditation and walk as one at 1pm. ALN is a nominated partner in this event. I intend to remain with that team to help promote World Labyrinth Day through ALN members and in multi-media publications and Louise will be working even harder to promote World Labyrinth Day in Educational Settings for the 6th of May.

I am resigning as chairperson in 2022 aware that I could never achieve all I dreamed of in one year because there is always more to do for the endurance and succession planning of any NFP, and many more creative ways to attract others to the labyrinth path and sign up to become active members of ALN. But I feel I have fulfilled my promise of being a support person to the highly qualified and competent volunteers who have all ensured that ALN remains as vibrant and relevant as possible.

I think my most significant contribution is my article *Ariadne's Thread The labyrinth of our Body Mind* published in Pathways, the annual magazine of the TLS and now available under the research menu of the ALN web page. Although I have many years of experience in mind-body medicine, as I studied for this, I felt like Alice falling down the rabbit hole past layers and layers of books and noticing there is much I am missing. I hope this swallow dive into anatomy and physiology and the physiological 'labyrinth effect' will stimulate future scientific interest in labyrinths.

God Bless you all as you keep walking. I hope many more will nominate for a position on Council to bring labyrinths to those who need help and will find the work as intellectually challenging and rewarding as I have.

Elizabeth Schiemer. Port Stephens. ALN Chairperson. 2021-2022.