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## April 2012

Our first three meetings this year have been very well attended by between 20 - 25 people and have attracted some very welcome new faces. This probably reflects the topics: disability support pensions, the Crisis Assessment Team (CAT) and, most recently, Employment Services. Our speakers have been very approachable and informative and there has been a cheerful buzz at supper afterwards.

At our forthcoming May meeting, Hayden Fricke, Judy Carroll's son, will speak about the important role that siblings can play in helping their family member/s towards recovery. He will also talk about the effect that mental illness in a family can have on brothers and sisters. Hayden is an experienced psychologist, has worked in senior management at State Trustees and now runs his own consultancy.

We are hoping for the involvement of the many siblings amongst our membership as it is an opportunity for them to contribute to the discussion.

Attendance at our meetings is open to all - it is not necessary to be a member of our group, however, membership is free and helps us to attract funding. If you are interested in any of the topics listed below, simply turn up at the **Betty Day Centre, 67 Argyle St, St Kilda**. We start promptly at 7.30pm so, if coming for the first time, come a bit early so that we can make you welcome with a hot drink and a sandwich.

**Tuesday 8th May  
at the Betty Day Centre  
Hayden Fricke  
Psychologist  
on the topic of  
SIBLINGS**

Please find a copy of our 'About us' poster outlining most of our program for 2012 on a separate sheet. Feel free to copy and distribute it to any others who you think might be interested.

### ISP&F Library

Our library continues to be under-utilised which is a pity because it has some excellent titles including copies of all of the SANE Books of the Year. These are all written locally and so take account of Australian conditions.

Attached is an abbreviated list of titles and authors and a borrowing sheet. Hart Grieb has gone to a lot of effort to streamline our procedures so let's make full use of this great resource! Lending is not limited to carers - we are happy to provide books to clients and staff members if you provide us with contact details.

### ARAFEMI Housing Forum

It was really good to see that so many of our members had managed, during the day and mid-week, to attend this well organised forum. Thanks to Lindy Alcorn at the CRCC and to MIND for providing transport.

The popularity of the event is a measure of the desperation so many carers experience trying to find suitable accommodation for someone with a mental illness. So often they are priced out of the private sector and face an acute shortage of supported accommodation. Too many end up in sub-standard alternatives and some, particularly those with a dual diagnosis, become homeless and are apt to lose contact with those who love them and have great difficulty in engaging with services.

At the forum the Victorian Mental Health Carers Network Inc. and ARAFEMI launched a **Tip Sheet on Housing for Carers of people with a mental illness**.

This can be downloaded from their websites and, for those without computer access, we will take copies to our support group meetings. Alternatively call us and we'll mail you a copy.

Based on suggestions made at the forum, ARAFEMI is hosting the following activities to offer more specific opportunities to meet other carers and get advice / support:

**1. Connect on-line via the ARAFEMI carer message board**

To meet and talk with other carers and form a network please go to: <http://www.arafemi.org.au/family-support/online-support.html>

**2. Join a need specific action group**

The first action group is for families and carers who are considering investing in property to meet the future accommodation needs of their loved one. This will be held at ARAFEMI Hawthorn 270 Auburn Road, Hawthorn 9810 9300 at 3-4.30pm Tuesday 8th May.

**3. Attend a specific future planning workshop**

on Tues 28 Aug at ARAFEMI Hawthorn from 7pm-9pm: 'Planning for the future when caring for someone with mental health issues has individual challenges, as compared to caring for someone with a physical illness. This seminar will explore legal issues, wills, and various options to ensure your family member will be supported in the future'.

**4. Keep Updated**

Arafemi will regularly update the Housing page on their website to let carers know of any other events or activities that may be of relevance to planning for the future.

**ISP&F is keen to play its part too** - we need to maintain pressure on all tiers of government to help improve access to low cost, secure accommodation. Anyone who'd like to be involved in approaching their local member/s please contact us as we are happy to provide you with support. The situation is not going completely unaddressed as you will gather from the next item - but the need is so acute that it will need continuous, ongoing, concerted action on our part to make any real progress.

**'Victoria secures new disability accommodation'**

Shortly before Easter, Minister Wooldridge announced 50 new accommodation places to be built for people with disabilities with combined State and Federal funding (\$14m and \$17m respectively). The largest project

will be 'Cairo' on the site of the former J.H. Boyd Girls' School 'in the heart of Southbank' where a new disabled-friendly residential tower is to be built by the Mackie Group and the service provider, Scope, with input of some \$7m from Government. Described as a 'vertical village', the development will comprise a high rise residential tower of approximately 220 apartments - a mix of private market, affordable housing and accessible supported accommodation. It is planned to include ten self-contained one bedroom apartments for people with disability. It is unclear at this stage whether the mix will include any individuals with mental health or drug and alcohol issues but 'there will be onsite support services, enabling the flexible and responsive delivery of individualised support'.

**National Disability Insurance Scheme**

There has been much talk at both Federal and State levels, in the lead up to their budgets, of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). However, the cost will be considerable and in times of financial stringency it is unlikely at this stage that funds will be provided for anything more than a feasibility study. In order to show community support for such a scheme, rallies have been planned throughout Australia for Monday, 30 April. In Melbourne it is hoped to attract a large crowd to Federation Square at 12 noon that day. At the very least it may provide an opportunity to hear a bit more about the practicalities of a National Disability Insurance Scheme which sounds highly desirable in theory.

**Inner South Mental Health Carer Network Forum on Wednesday, July 25th  
Ashley Ricketson Centre  
Caulfield Hospital**

The ISMHC Network represents most of the organisations with involvement in mental health services in the Inner South East region - Alfred Psychiatry, the CRCC, Inner South Community Health Service, Prahran Mission, Mind, Grow, Jewish Care, and serves the same demographic area as ours. We are represented by two of our committee members - all the other participants are paid mental health workers. This late afternoon forum has become something of an annual event and in 2012 it will focus on client engagement and motivation, and recovery oriented practice. Further details will be circulated once they are to hand so please put the date in your diary now.