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### October 2013

Following our AGM in August we are delighted to welcome three new committee members, Judi Burstyner, Sue Johnson and Margaret Thorpe which gives us a strong team of eleven committed people. We shall miss Liz Grieb who has made a big contribution over a number of years. She brought considerable skills from her time as a South Melbourne Councillor and was always willing to take on specific tasks thus spreading the work load and she has the artist's capacity for lateral thinking. Her partner, Hart stays on as our treasurer, looks after our library and represents carers on the Carer Support fund.

#### Mental Health Week Sunday 6 - Saturday 11 October

**Monday 7 October:** Launch of MH Week by the Minister and Professor Graeme Burrows at the Deakin Edge, Federation Square 4 - 6.30pm.

**Tuesday 8 October:**

Bouverie Centre Mini Conference 9.15 - 4.30 pm  
*'The T Word (Trauma) does it make a difference?'* at 8 Gardiner Street, Brunswick.  
Free but call Alyce Smith on 9385 5100 to book.

**Friday 11 October: National Mental Health Commission Meeting**

You are invited to join the NHMC for Afternoon Tea on Friday 11 October 2:00pm - 4:00pm Rydges Hotel, 186 Exhibition Street, Melbourne. Please consider attending as it is very important for the carer voice to be heard by the Commission.

[rsvp@mentalhealthcommission.gov.au](mailto:rsvp@mentalhealthcommission.gov.au) or call (02) 8229 7509

#### Carers' Week Sunday 12 - Saturday 19 October

**Tuesday 15 October 10am-1.30pm** the **Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre** - invite you to attend a FREE *Carers Week* event with activities and a celebratory light lunch *'to acknowledge the valuable contribution made by carers in our community'*. Refreshments and activities at Caulfield Park Pavilion, Balaclava Road. **To book call 9076 4050** or for more information see: [www.carersouth.org.au](http://www.carersouth.org.au)

**Tuesday 15 October at 6.30pm: MI Fellowship Members Forum in Fairfield** to discuss future directions including a suggestion that they may join with the Royal District Nursing Service.

RSVP to Tamara on 8486 4212 or email [membership@mifellowship.org](mailto:membership@mifellowship.org)

**Saturday 19 October ISFAF Film afternoon: 'About Time'** see enclosed Flyer and please don't forget to book - call 9076 4713 or email [isfaf@alfred.org](mailto:isfaf@alfred.org)

#### Action for Recovery Program (ARC) Update on the Dual Diagnosis Program at Family Drug Help/SHARC

Two members of our group have just finished the latest ARC program and have found it absolutely excellent. The cost is a minimal \$60 which includes course materials and light refreshments each evening. Angela Ireland, who runs the course, is an inspiration and people who have done the program find it very helpful.

To book for the next course or make inquiries call 9573 1706 or email [arc@sharc.org.au](mailto:arc@sharc.org.au)

#### World Hearing Voices Congress Melbourne 20-22 November Melbourne Convention Centre

Voice hearers, consumers, service users, clinicians, community workers, carers and family, researchers and students will gather to build a better understanding of hearing voices and new ways of thinking about recovery.

*'Three days of new ideas, collaborative conversations, innovative research and practice, and stories of hope and creativity'*. The organisers have generously provided one ticket at a discount to be shared within our group and we will purchase another. If you are interested in going please email or leave a voicemail message at our office telling us on which of the three days you would like to attend. We will ask each person to contribute \$50 to offset the cost but support is available via the Carer Support Fund if you are eligible. For further information see:

<http://www.regonline.com.au/builder/site/default.aspx?EventID=1196422>

**Carers Vic  
"Invisible Care Report"  
August 2013**

This is an important report. Many carers suffer severe financial hardship but find it difficult to elicit support from Centrelink despite being heavily burdened looking after someone with mental illness. If you have a personal story of hardship it may be worth communicating directly with Carers Vic because the more they can support their report with coal face experiences the better. To find the report follow this link on: [http://www.carersvictoria.org.au/Assets/Files/Carers%20Victoria\\_Invisible\\_Care\\_Report\\_2013.pdf](http://www.carersvictoria.org.au/Assets/Files/Carers%20Victoria_Invisible_Care_Report_2013.pdf)

**A New Mental Health Act for  
Victoria**

Pip Thomas, who spoke at our AGM, is co-ordinating implementation of the new Act in the Alfred region. The Bill is still in the process of drafting and printed communication with Consumer and Carer groups is to be handled centrally by the Department. We will pass on whatever we receive promptly for comment.

The Bill is to have a recovery orientation and an assessment of processes already in place within Alfred Psychiatry will begin this month. A Mental Health Tribunal will replace the Mental Health Review Board but there will be a transition process which will lead towards the Tribunal structure.

**Mental Health Act - Complaints Process**

**We have been invited by the Department to participate in reviewing the Complaints Process for the new Act. We would like to hear from those interested in being involved so that we can arrange a suitable date and time to meet with Louise Clery from the Department. Please call or email our office as soon as possible: [isfaf@alfred.org.au](mailto:isfaf@alfred.org.au) or T. 9076 4713**

**Mental Health Legal Centre**

In June it was reported that the Mental Health Legal Centre was to close and funds had been transferred to Victoria Legal Aid. We have since been informed that, from October 1, a limited program will also be run from RMIT's Centre for Innovative Justice with philanthropic funding.

Mr Rob Hulls, director of the RMIT centre and a strong supporter of the MHLC said the partnership would be a catalyst to its "rebirth", which he hoped would be fully restored before the trust's funding ran out next year. This is good news given that some clients needing legal representation are on Community Treatment

Orders imposed by the State and should at least be given a fair hearing.

We also raised a difficulty faced by carers in the past, that the MHLC has not been able to provide them with advice. The Centre could only deal face to face with clients with a mental illness. This question will be taken up by the Department for discussion.

**A Free Legal Service for Women  
1300 134 130 [www.wire.org.au](http://www.wire.org.au)**

**The Case for Mental Health Reform in  
Australia:  
A Review of Expenditure and System Design**

A report sponsored by Medibank and put together by the 'NOUS group' claims that the critical issues in mental health system design are:

- *Mental health services encompass a complex network of care settings and service providers.*
- *There are mixed and overlapping responsibilities for mental health funding and expenditure.*
- *Fragmentation of funding and services is exacerbated by the lack of coordination within the healthcare system and between the healthcare and social services systems.*
- *Total direct expenditure on supporting people with a mental illness in Australia far exceeds that previously estimated .....but*
- *Mental health outcomes in Australia are sub-optimal.*

A range of reform models are discussed and the report suggests that Australia has an unprecedented opportunity to lead the world in end-to-end mental health system redesign to deliver better outcomes at the same or lower cost. The full report can be downloaded at [www.medibankhealth.com.au/Mental\\_Health\\_Reform](http://www.medibankhealth.com.au/Mental_Health_Reform)

**'Reforming Community Support Services for  
People with a Mental Illness'**

A framework for Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation and Support Services has recently been published by the Department of Health see: [www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/pdrss-reform/](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/pdrss-reform/)

Services will now be known as **Mental Health Community Support Services** and will be delivered across 16 service catchments. Initially five service providers will trial a new \$2.5 million initiative to make it easier for Victorians to access community based mental health care. Inner South Community Health Service will receive approximately \$450,000 to run one of the five pilot programs in Bayside, our region. In announcing the providers, Minister for Mental Health, Mary Wooldridge said *'they will develop*

*and test new models for assessing the needs and treatment requirements of people with a mental illness. This initiative will deliver better management of access to the range of Mental Health Community Support Services, which includes home based outreach support, day programs, carer coordination and bed based service. The initiative places an emphasis on addressing the needs of the person at the start of their treatment to ensure opportunity for long term recovery and enable people to live independently in the community".*

Effectively this seems to imply that referrals for mental health services in the community will need to be made via Inner South Community Health Service and not directly with another provider.

### **DisabilityCare Australia**

You will most likely be aware that the National Disability Insurance Scheme has become DisabilityCare Australia.

Carer South News summarised the Key facts thus:

- The national headquarters will be in Geelong
- The Victorian launch site is in the Barwon region, where about 5,000 people with a disability will be supported during the launch phase.
- From July 2016, DisabilityCare Australia will progressively roll out in Victoria and by July 2019, all eligible residents will be covered.
- By 2019, it is expected that this initiative will provide individualised support to over 100,000 Victorians with disability
- The scheme will take a person-centred, flexible approach. Examples of support available on the Disability Carer Australia website include: information and referral, developing a personal plan, early intervention support and funded supports.

It is as yet unclear how, and to what extent, those with mental health issues will be included within the scheme but operational guidelines have been released and are to be found at:

[www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au)

### **Port Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre Inc. October - December Program**

A broad selection of activities is planned for the next three months by this excellent community organisation. They include Computing, Health and Wellbeing, Art and Performance, Activities such as gardening, knitting, bridge, Education, Recreation (outings), volunteering and even a grandparents playgroup! For greater detail call 9645 1476 or see [www.pmnh.org.au](http://www.pmnh.org.au)

### **Inner South Family and Friends Support Group Meetings - 2nd Tuesday each month**

We have been privileged to have had a wonderful range of excellent speakers this year and Dr Friedin, in September, was no exception. As the psychiatrist in charge of the Homeless Outreach Psychiatric Support (HOPS) team and a past President of RANZCP there would be few people better placed to talk about the needs of the homeless, a great many of whom suffer from mental health issues. He spoke with compassion and a great deal of common sense. Clearly, despite his assertion that Victoria probably has some of the best mental health services in the world, he also agreed that there is still a great deal more to be done. The range of material in this newsletter indicates that much thought has been given to service delivery..... but the time has arrived for action so that funds actually reach those in dire need!

We are very fortunate this month to have Brian Barrow coming to speak about the interface between the mentally ill and the law (see flyer for details). He has worked tirelessly for decades to improve the way in which Magistrates' Courts deal with the mentally ill and substance abusers and has campaigned strongly for a better understanding of the issues in the broader community.

At our November 12 meeting, Dr Simon Stafrace will provide his 'annual report' on services at Alfred Psychiatry and indicate how these are changing in order to accommodate the various new initiatives.

In December - either 3rd or 10th - we will hold our end of year dinner. Further details will be provided once arrangements are finalised.

Penny Lewisohn  
**Convener, ISFAF**



**Don't forget to RSVP for our film on  
19 October - see flyer for details**