



Telephone (03) 9076 4713
E-mail: isfaf@alfred.org.au
Website: <http://www.ispaf.org>
Office and mail address:
C/- Waiora Clinic
Level 2, 435 Malvern Road, South Yarra 3141

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Professor Jayashri Kulkarni spoke to about forty members at our AGM with her characteristic empathy and enthusiasm. Monash Alfred Psychiatry Research Centre (MAPrc) of which she is the Director has some 180 people working directly with the organisation but collaborates with a wide number of researchers from around the world. They have made some very important breakthroughs, particularly in the area of women's mental health and in brain stimulation, but rather than try to summarise what was an extremely interesting talk we'd strongly encourage you to access their website which is inspirational in its breadth: <http://www.maprc.org.au/>

A small group of ISFAF members took part in the De Castella run (but at a walking pace!!) a few days after our AGM. This event has raised around \$80,000 towards MAPrc - including a rather smaller contribution from ISFAF than we would have wished. When one contrasts this figure with the \$16,846,396 raised in the 2014 Good Friday Appeal towards the Royal Children's Hospital one realises the 'poor relation' status of mental health.

The stigma attached to mental illness, despite excellent work done by organisations such as SANE trying to reduce its effect, is surely the primary cause of the neglect. If we are to improve the capacity of clinical services and research facilities such as MAPrc this stigma has to be overcome. There are few families completely untouched by mental illness but most are extremely reluctant to be open about it for fear of the consequences.

Mental Health Week 5 - 11 October

Victorian Mental Health Week is an annual event that takes place during the first full week of October and has been running since 1982.

The Mental Health Foundation of Victoria coordinates events - you may like to trawl their site: <http://www.mentalhealthvic.org.au/index>

ISFAF has been allocated space to promote our group at the Official Opening of Mental Health Week by The Hon Mary Wooldridge MP in the Deakin Edge Theatre, Federation Square. It is a

beautiful space and we would welcome any members who would like to join us from **3.30 - 6.30pm Monday 6 October**.

Two other events caught my eye: *'Developing a Toolkit of Coping Strategies for Anxiety'* - practical strategies for managing anxiety, including breathing and mindfulness techniques. **Cost:** \$15
When: 1 - 3pm Wednesday 8 October
Where: 283 Canterbury Rd, Surrey Hills
RSVP: ARCVic on 9830 0566 and

'Waterway Wander and Wonders' A two hour walk-and-talk on a bush track beside the Yarra in Warrandyte, meeting at 10.30am on Sunday 5 October in North Warrandyte.

Violeta's Mental Health Display Main Foyer Alfred Hospital Mental Health & Carer Weeks 6th - 16th October

Violeta would like any help we can offer her in overseeing the display of materials she is mounting at the Alfred in the main foyer. A number of us have helped in the past and if you would be able to give a couple of hours around lunchtime during the week it would be greatly appreciated. Hospital staff have shown a lot of interest in previous years and it can be helpful if there is an empathetic listener.....for many people it is the first time that they will have disclosed that they are seeking help for someone.

ABC "Mental As..."

The ABC is launching *'Mental As.....'* the biggest cross-platform programming event ever conducted by them, for Mental Health Week, 5-12 October 2014.

Across ABC TV, radio, online and mobile *'Mental As....'* will take a look at mental health from all angles and perspectives, from comedy to documentary, entertainment to debate, 'in an aim to join the dots on mental health in Australia.'

On three successive evenings, 6th, 7th and 8th October, at 8.30pm, the ABC will air an hour long documentary *'Changing Minds'*, filmed inside

Liverpool Hospital's Mental Health Unit, interviewing inpatients and clinicians.

The week will culminate in a two-hour, live, TV fundraising event the '**Friday Night Crack Up**' on World Mental Health Day, Friday 10 October at 7.30pm. Australia's biggest personalities – comedians, actors, sportspeople, and musicians – will show their support for '*Mental As...*' and encourage Australians to take action, start talking, and give to mental health research. For further information about programming go to: <http://about.abc.net.au/press-releases/abc-goes-mental-as/> or simply turn on your TV and radio.

Elections for Victorian Parliament - 29 November 2014

Some of you attended a forum in the City convened by Tandem and Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council (VMIA) and a consortium of 18 other NGOs in early September. Despite being very well organised it illustrated just how difficult it is to meaningfully engage with politicians and the political process. They all have their own agendas and getting them to listen to ours is not easy!

The Minister for Mental Health, the Hon Mary Wooldridge, the ALP Shadow Minister, Gavin Jennings and Colleen Hartland, spokesperson on mental health for the Greens, all attended the forum and spoke. Attached to this newsletter is a 'Manifesto' which was presented to them.

ISFAF is planning to bring this 'Manifesto' to the attention of local candidates standing for election in our region. We have invited a selection of candidates to meet with our committee and a small group of members in late October in the hope that some grass roots political pressure might encourage increased awareness and funding of mental health.

If you would like to provide specific instances which highlight points made in the 'Manifesto' please try very hard to come to our monthly support group meeting on Tuesday 14 October at which we will be making final plans for our meeting with candidates the following week. We need short, clearly expressed examples to highlight some of the problems we experience.

If you have been helped by Michelle Swan when she held the position of Carer Advocate, formerly funded by Arafemi, please let us know. Examples of homelessness, where drug and alcohol issues have landed victims in jail, difficulties encountered when moving between services or dealing with crises, failure to engage carers when clearly they are affected by outcomes....this is an opportunity to engage directly with some of those who'll be decision makers in the next Parliament. New

arrangements in the Mental Health Community Support Sector look as if they will take a lot longer to stabilise than anticipated - it would be good to be able to provide candidates with current examples of where people are falling through the cracks.

ISFAF HOUSING GROUP

Our Housing Group has been busy visiting a range of facilities and researching the ways in which housing is provided to individuals with mental health problems. They have contacted overseas organisations as well as local groups and have visited several residences.

A major hurdle will be to find a suitable and affordable location. Groups such as Fintry in Clifton Hill and The Haven in South Yarra have had very great assistance from Baptist and Catholic churches respectively. Long term leases on church property to be used for social housing have enabled these two projects to succeed.

If any of our members are aware of any properties that could be modified to provide housing and which could be acquired at minimal cost via an organisation such as a church, council or other social network, please contact Judi Burstyn on 0425 723 746. Properties previously used for aged care but no longer suitable, as that sector moves to higher level care, might also be appropriate. Any suggestions would be welcome.

Alfred Psychiatry News

A/Professor Simon Stafrace, Director, Alfred Psychiatry writes in the Community News that the service would 'like to encourage patients and families to talk to their clinicians about the ways in which decision making can be supported through the use of Advanced Treatment Plans, notified persons, written Recovery /Treatment Plans and Discharge/Separation Summaries. These tools can promote meaningful collaboration between clinicians, clients and families. We want them to ultimately support patients to assume control of their healthcare with trust and confidence.'

Nominated Persons - Information Sessions

are still being held at the Waiora Clinic in South Yarra on the last Wednesday of each month from 3.30pm-4.30pm. Those who have attended have found them very helpful. Call Vicky Northe or Violeta Peterson on 9076 4700.

What is the meaning of carer under the New Mental Health Act (Kate Baddock, Mental Health Act Implementation Manager writing in Alfred Psychiatry's Community Newsletter): *'The term carer has a particular meaning in relation to the Act and means a person, who provides care to another person with whom he or she is in a care*

relationship. Things that the psychiatrist may consider in making a decision whether a person is a carer may include whether the consumer lives with the carer, the type of care provided and how long the carer has provided support. The psychiatrist or clinician must involve the carer and notify them at important points in care (in the same way they would for a nominated person) if they are satisfied that an event will directly affect the carer and the care relationship. If a consumer has a carer, please inform admin so they can be recorded as a 'Compulsory Notification' in Alfred Psychiatry's centralised database.

News in Brief

ISFAF Dining Group - a date has been set for the first of these occasions - Wednesday, 29 October at Basilico, a wood fired pizza restaurant at 180 Bridport Street, Albert Park.

We are in the throes of drawing up some ground-rules and will email them around nearer the date. If you do not have email but would like to join us that evening please call our office on 9076 4713 and leave your name.

We're not sure whether members realise that it is a matter of paying one's own way so we will try to find inexpensive but attractive venues and change locality each time. Some gatherings could be at lunchtime for those who are free during the day.

Sacred Heart Mission has arranged an exhibition of visual arts and music performances, ***Sit with Me***, by resident artists of the Mission's Queens Road Rooming House. It will be displayed at the **Gallery in the St Kilda Town Hall, Carlisle Street entrance, until 8 October**

The 2014 Mental Health Masquerade Ball

All Welcome - Refreshments provided

Venue: Prahran Town Hall

Time: Wed. 8 October 5 - 9pm

Run by Inner South Community Health Service to mark Mental Health Week. **Free.**

WellWays Duo (Dual Diagnosis)

MI Fellowship is still seeking participants for this family education program (6 x 3hr sessions on a Wed. evening):

Venue: Inner South Community Health Service, 341 Coventry St, Sth. Melb.

Date: Starting on 15 October at 6pm

Cost: \$25 to cover materials

Tel. Jacinta Pope on 9784 6800.

Rada Semec from Spectrum spoke about Borderline Personality Disorder at our September Support Group meeting. She was not available this month and the Job services couldn't come in

September. It was unfortunate that a great many people were away because Rada gave us an excellent understanding of the difficulties faced by people with BPD and was still responding to questions well after our normal finishing time! For those who missed the evening see <http://www.spectrumbpd.com.au/>

Cruden Farm Family Fun Day

Sunday 26 October 11am - 4pm

Adults: \$25, Concession \$20 Under 15: Free

Bookings or enquiries call the Mental Health Foundation Australia on **9826 1422.**

The Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre has changed name and is now **Alfred Hospital Carer Services 1800 052 222.**

NEAMI - is the new central intake service in our region for Mental Health Community Support Services (MHCSS - formerly PDRSS). Call **1300 379 462.**

Bayside Integrated Services - the central intake service for Drugs and Alcohol is based at Inner South Community Health Service and can be contacted on **1800 229 263.**

GROW is holding an '**Odd Socks Day**' on Friday 10 October to mark World Mental Health Day. The purpose is to create a talking point around mental health issues. They would like to encourage people to hold their own 'odd socks' event to mark the occasion.

Respite: MI Fellowship is taking a group of Carers to Peninsula Hot Springs on 22 October and a group on a Queenscliff Getaway (date yet to be arranged). **To book call 9784 6800.**

This month promises to be a busy one for our group embracing Mental Health and Carer weeks and a range of our own activities:

Tues. 14 October: Support Meeting - planning meeting for political lobbying.

Sun. 18 October: Film Afternoon - bookings via email or call 9076 4713.

Wed. 29 October - Dining Group Please let us know if you'd be happy helping with the organisation of an event - we have had a couple of other offers and will be sharing around the load.

Let us hope that we may experience a period of stability in the final quarter of 2014. It seems to have been rather a turbulent winter.

With best wishes,

Penny Lewisohn