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January 2016

Though it's almost the end of January and nearly 10% of 2016 has flown past I still shudder with disbelief when I need to date things 2016 rather than 2015.

Firstly I'd like to welcome our new members.

Looking back at 2015, I feel very grateful for the wonderful help and support that I've been given. I'm not going to mention any names because I'm bound to accidentally leave someone out, but (in alphabetical order!) without Edwina's amazing diligence in getting newsletters and other material printed and posted, Judith's constant monitoring of the internet and Penny's guidance and hard work and the support and hard work of all our committee and past committee members, we would not have functioned. Throughout the past, I have been brought to task regularly for my poor administrative and general office management skills, so without the support I have been given; the ISFAF office would have descended into chaos.

Our December dinner was noisy and crowded – but this is a reflection of the vitality of our group and the high attendance. We could not have had such a successful event without the help and subsidy obtained from Commonwealth Respite Services for which we sincerely thank Lindy Alcorn. I gained a lot of pleasure from the buzz and camaraderie that was evident, but nothing pleased me more than seeing our loved ones joining in and adding to the vibrancy of the night. I have immeasurable respect and admiration for their strength in overcoming the numerous difficulties they have faced.

The drive for consumers to share their experiences and help others has gained great strength internationally. I urge the consumers amongst us to consider seriously the enormous help that they may be able to provide to others. Consumers can help others in many ways –peer workers, who are now well-respected members of mental health teams throughout the world, or in many other less structured roles. An opportunity to meet other consumers and to learn about their experiences and the opportunities available to consumers to provide benefit to others is the following forum. Please try to RSVP by Feb 11.

Forum: The Peer Effect

<http://www.carersouth.org.au/sites/default/files/Peer%20Effect%20Forum%20flyer%202016.pdf>

How to make your lived experience count!

Are you interested in making your lived experience of mental health illness and/or substance use count? Are you interested in hearing about how others have found opportunities to use their lived experience? Are you interested in connecting with other local people with similar interest in peer participation? Would you like to meet local service providers who employ peer workers, consultants and advisors? Would you like to know more about NDIS and peer work? If so please attend:

Box Hill Town Hall on 25 February 2016

10 am to 4 pm, no charge

Morning tea and lunch provided

RSVP: patricia.huddleston@easternhealth.org.au

If you have questions phone Paula Kelly 9847 4711 or email her

paula.kelly2@easternhealth.org.au

Our Dining Group

has also benefitted from a mix of generations. It's considered normal in most societies that the generations eat and socialise together. The older generations are revitalized by the presence of the younger set, which in turn, gain from the wisdom of the older generation. I find it heart-warming that this is happening in our Dining Group. Dates for future meetings will be announced soon. We have received suggestion for suitable venues and are always happy to accept more suggestions of modestly priced places in our area and close to transport and parking.

2016 Meetings

- **second Tuesday night of every month**
- **Betty Day Centre, 67 Argyle Street, St Kilda**

The committee has chosen a wonderful wide range of interesting speakers, commencing with the following:

TUESDAY 9 FEBRUARY

We are very fortunate to have two senior representatives of Mind coming to speak to us.

Dianne Hardy, Director, Mind Recovery College

& Emma Higgins, a Learning Development Consultant at the College,

Dianne will speak about new developments at the College and will highlight some of the courses that may be of interest and how these can be accessed. She is happy to take questions and suggested ideas 1

Emma has a wealth of experience and knowledge about Mind's other services and will update us on these.

In the meantime, many new initiatives are available on the Mind website, some of which may be starting soon. It might be useful to look at the website prior to Dianne and Emma's visit so if you have questions, you can ask the experts at our meeting.

<http://www.mindaustralia.org.au/assets/docs/Resources/MRC-course-guide-July-Dec-web.pdf> and also at:

<http://recoverycollege.org.au/courses/melbourne.html>

TUESDAY 10 MARCH

Our planned speakers are:

- **Kellie Shanley Coordinator and**
- **Michelle Hooper**

who monitor the Clozapine Programme at The Alfred.

Their speech will update us on psychiatric medications, with an emphasis on clozapine.

Those of you who receive email will have read about the following excellent opportunity which commences 2 February. I'm sorry if the hard copy of this reaches you later than 2 Feb, but if so, it highlights the advantages of receiving ISFAF emails, from which you would have received this information on time.

Action for Recovery Course (ARC) in Prahran

Inner South Community Health have commissioned Family Drug Help, a program of SHARC to facilitate a six week educational program for family members (aged 18yrs+) of a person with problematic alcohol /drug use living in Prahran and surrounding areas.

ARC provides families with knowledge and skills to understand substance misuse. It seeks to improve family dynamics and offers simple strategies to cope with anxiety and stress. ARC covers topics such as boundaries, guilt, worry, acceptance and also includes a comprehensive workbook of strategies along with other tools to support change for families.

Past ARC participants have stated that the course helped to reduce feelings of isolation, fear, anxiety, depression, helplessness and shame by gaining support, information and education.

Dates: Tuesday 2 Feb – 8 March 2016

Time: 6pm – 7:45pm

Location: Prahran Bookings are essential.

Phone the ARC Facilitator on 9573 1706 or email arc@sharc.org.au to book a place or to enquire further about the program.

Mental Health Carers NDIS Guide and Checklist

<https://mhaustralia.org/fact-sheets/mental-health-carers-ndis-guide-and-checklist>

Mental Health Australia and Carers Australia have developed a 'Guide for Mental Health Carers on the NDIS' and a 'Mental Health Carer Checklist' to prepare for NDIS assessment and planning meetings. The guide and checklist provide information to help carers support the person they care for to engage with the NDIS effectively.

Carers Vic have a great deal of useful information and upcoming functions on their website.

<http://www.carersvictoria.org.au/>

This newsletter is being written on a train while I'm still away, so I'll keep it short.

Looking forward to seeing you all, especially our new members at Tuesday night meetings and social events.

Warm regards and best wishes

Judi Burstyner, Convenor

30 January 2016