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December 2023

It's hard to start this newsletter with sad news but today we attended the Memorial Service for the sad loss of our very long time, beloved member Tah Wen Chu, who died aged 92 after a long fight against cancer. Listening to the inspiring story of Tah Wen's life which began in Wuhan, crossed many countries, included many accolades for his immense achievements in architecture, tertiary teaching, singing and gourmet cooking to name just a few of his many accomplishments which were mentioned in his daughter and son's eulogies. That both his children, Alexandra and Nic followed in his footsteps into architecture is a credit to Tah Wen. Alexandra lives in Shanghai, where she headed the prize-winning Australia house design. Miriam and Nic, Tah Wen's wife and son are loved members of the ISFAF family. I feel privileged to have known Tah Wen and will always remember him for his intelligence, wisdom, warm smile, kindness, thoughtfulness and quiet humility.

On October 12, we lost another of our long-term members. Rachel Merhav suffered throughout 2023 with an invasive tumour which was diagnosed only a few months after the sudden, tragic death of her son Israel at Christmas 2022. Rachel will always be remembered for her contributions to discussions at our monthly meetings and many recommendations for the benefit of ISFAF members. Raising her son and daughter Rebeckah, Rachel, like many of our members, appreciated her luck in being able to 'Call Australia Home' after migrating here from Israel. Our hearts go to Rebeckah who has lost her brother and mother within such a short period.

Linda Bader was an active member of ISFAF for many years. As a committee member, her intelligence, wisdom, compassion, kindness and thoughtfulness were apparent in many of the successful events and the growth of ISFAF. She and her husband Colin, fought their cancers valiantly, but Linda's suffering became extreme, leading to her death by Voluntary Assisted Suicide yesterday. We mourn her loss together with Colin, sons Jeremy and Alexander, Linda's mother and an extended, a loving family and friends.

We mourn the loss of family and friends, which seems to me to be more frequent in the ISFAF community than in the general community.

However, achievement and dedication seem also more frequent among our ISFAF family than generally. Our amazing member Pauline D'Astoli was awarded an AOM this year and won 'Health Volunteer of the Year' at the Victorian Public Healthcare Awards. Pauline, despite being a very dedicated carer for her son Michael, and until recently also for her husband Chris, spends an enormous amount of time advocating for the community, including as Community Advisory Chair at Peninsula Health, participation in AMAH's Physical Health Portfolio and many other services to the mental health and general community.



Victorian Government Melbourne Award won by Heidi Everett and Shizy Inc

In October, Schizy Inc won the prestigious Access and Inclusion Melbourne Award for the Mojo Festival for World Schizophrenia Day! Now in its 21st year, the Melbourne Awards are the City of Melbourne's highest accolade, celebrating the inspirational Melburnians who dedicate their time and energy to making this city a world leader. The award honoured Heidi and Schizy for leadership specifically enabling and empowering people with complex mental health, and creating good social connections among disadvantaged people in the Melbourne community. [**MELBOURNE AWARDS 2023 -](#)

[MOJO](#) **



While public conversations are still about trying to sort out the problems in the mental health (illness) system, Schizy Inc is getting on and paving a way forward in the fun-way system

Heidi was our guest speaker in 2017 and we have invited her to return to us in 2023. In addition to her inspiring talk, we were treated to some of her heartwarming songs and look forward to her sharing them with us again.

My Medicare

<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-09/mymedicare-gp-toolkit.pdf>

MyMedicare is a voluntary patient registration system that aims to formalise the relationship between patients, their general practice, general practitioner (GP) and primary care teams. Evidence shows that seeing the same GP and healthcare team regularly leads to better health outcomes for patients.

When a general practice and their patients register in MyMedicare, the Australian Government will provide additional funding to assist the general practice provide targeted care based on patient needs. This funding will enable registered GPs to provide longer funded telehealth consultations and bulk billed longer telehealth consultations for children under 16 and Commonwealth concession card holders at the new triple billing rate.

If a patient is an aged care resident and is registered in MyMedicare, their healthcare provider will receive additional incentives to provide proactive care through regular visits and care planning. Anyone with a Medicare card or a Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA) Veteran card can register via their doctor.

The following will be introduced to My Medicare:

- **July 2024 – Frequent hospital users' incentive** - New incentive for GPs to provide quality continuity of care to people who frequently attend hospital because of complex chronic disease
- **August 2024 – General practice in Aged Care incentive** - The Australian Government is investing \$112 million over 4 years in the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive (GPACI) to support every aged care resident to receive quality primary care services from a regular GP and practice
- **November 2024 – Chronic Disease Management items** - items linked to a patient's registration in MyMedicare from November 2024, to support continuity of care for people with chronic and complex conditions.

What is a Tailored Support Package?

If you're an unpaid carer, you might be eligible for a Tailored Support Package, which is based on your unique caring situation. This could include respite care, equipment to support your studies, or help with cooking, cleaning and travel.

Some assistance that the Gateway provided carers with recently is in home respite to allow them to undertake employment, or to engage in education. In home respite can also enable a carer to take time to reconnect with family and friends, or to pursue a hobby or some recreation, to help you to look after the carer's needs.

To chat to someone about whether a Tailored Support package could assist you, phone Carer Gateway on 1800 422 737

The following NDIS providers may offer accommodation for people with disabilities who have the Supported Independent Living SIL level of an NDIS package ie. requiring a high level of support:

Nest website gonest.com.au
Friendly Care Services ph. 0411 749 840
Holistic Futures ph. 0490 065 296
Wings of Care ph. 1300 914 100
Specialist Care Australia ph. 0410 770 722
Lending Hands ph. 1300 896 030
Maple ph. [0451 630 376](tel:0451630376)

New Fuel Discounts For Victorian Government Carer Card Holders

Carers Victoria welcomes the Victorian Government's news that Victorian Carer Card holders will be able to access fuel discounts through a new partnership with United Petroleum. The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) has announced that from 11 December 2023, Victorian Carer Card holders can register for a digital or plastic United fuel discount card. This will allow them to save 4 cents per litre on fuel at United service stations across Australia

<https://www.carersvictoria.org.au/news-and-stories/the-voice-blog/the-voice-blog-december-2023#NewFuelDiscounts>

Discounted Accor accommodation and Competition to win \$500 Voucher

Carer's Victoria has partnered with Accor, a leading hospitality group, to provide discounts on hotel stays at Accor's Victorian properties, in a continued effort to support carers. This collaboration recognises the tireless dedication of carers and aims to provide them with much-needed respite.

You need to be a Carers Victoria member to be eligible for the discounts, which are subject to availability. They are valid until 30 December 2024. One lucky person will win a \$500 voucher by completing a form on the website before 30 December 2023. There is no need to book for the competition – just need to fill out a very short form.

[Accor | Carers Victoria](#) or phone:1800 514 845

Services Australia **Services Australia**

The above link is to Services Australia which is an Australian Government On-line Service designed to help individuals navigate government services and payments that are available. Even to me, who has no patience with websites, it seems comprehensive. A range of locations are covered by this centre, which is easy to navigate. For example:

For carers: [Caring for someone - Services Australia](#)

To access the information. Income test link is under 'hours you can work'.

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/working-while-youre-getting-disability-support-pension?context=22276>

https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/news/additional-support-unpaid-carers?j=64079&sfmc_sub=23985921&l=200_HTML&u=1720788&mid=514011159&jb=510

Monash University – Brain and Cognitive Health Cohort Study

Are you aged 55–80 and want to contribute to cutting edge research on healthy brain ageing? Associate Professor Matthew Pase and his team at the Turner Institute for Brain and Mental Health (Monash University) have launched the Brain and Cognitive Health (BACH) Cohort Study. The study will follow a large group of adults for five years to investigate factors that promote healthy brain ageing. The aim is to help make dementia preventable for future generations.

For more information or to get involved, visit the [BACH Cohort Study website](#) or email bachcohortstudy@monash.edu

Hoyts: Discounts for Carers

Thank you to **Hoyts Cinemas** for renewing the carers discount for another year. Hoyts is offering carers an adult ticket for \$1.10 when accompanying the person, they care for to the cinema. All carers must produce their state or territory Carers Association card, along with photo ID, to redeem the offer.

To read more about the offer, and its terms and conditions, click on the link below.

[Carer Offers - Carers Australia](#)

TANDEM, Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect and the Act

As we all know by now, Family Led Carer Centres are operating across Victoria. Under their new name - Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect.

The centre for SE Melbourne is currently at 341 Coventry Street South Melbourne – opposite the market, but a range of locations across the SE are covered by this centre, with more to open, possibly Bentleigh, Dandenong, Frankston.

<https://bhn.org.au/south-east-metro-carer-and-family-led-centre/>

Walk-ins are welcome, Monday, Thursday and Friday between 9.30am and 4.30pm or contact via phone on 9066 1500 or carerscentre@starhealth.org.au

Tandem's planned visit to the SE Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect provides an excellent opportunity to acquaint yourself with the centre and team, as well as to share a light lunch and to learn about:

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Act

12pm - 1:30pm Thursday 15 February 2024
Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect Centre,
341 Coventry Street, South Melbourne

I've attended a similar session and found Jo and Sara's presentations to be outstanding.

Registration is essential via email to Jo at joanne.pankhurst@tandemcarers.org.au or Ph: 8803 5555. The room holds only a limited number, so I suggest you register asap.

DATES TO DIARIZE

Walk n Chats: 1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month.

Walk a bit, coffee at expense of ISFAF. Family, including canines very welcome. Times and locations can vary, but often 1pm walk, 2pm coffee, Elwood Beach

To Book: phone –speak to – Sue on mobile 0400 175 909 the day before or by 10am on the day of the walk. **Call Judi only if Sue is unavailable on mobile 0425723746**

Photo from today's walkers:



PTO



Monthly Meeting February to November 2024

2nd Tuesday of the month – 7.30pm at 549 St Kilda Rd with refreshments available at from 7.05 pm

**February 13 – (day before St Valentine's)
speaker tba**

Keep the following Tuesday evenings free:

12 March, 9 April, 14 May, 11 June, 9 July, 13 August, 10 September, 8 October, 12 November and EOY Dinner on 10 December.

Events being planned include:

- **Day Trip to Peninsula Hot Springs (Feb – Mar)**
- **Day at Rural Art Gallery
Lunch at Parliament House and Tour of The Mint**
- **World Mental Health Day – lunch**
- **Carers week Film and lunch**

Please email suggestions for events to: isfaf@alfred.org.au c/c to judiburstyner@gmail.com

Merry Christmas, Safe, Healthy Holiday Season to you all, Judi