



connections

It's about you - your wellbeing, your independence

VOL. 4

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our mission:

Promoting choice and participation through leadership and innovation in our services, partnerships and work in the community.

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Indigenous Youth Camp 2007

Care Connect has been working closely with the Indigenous Community in the Shire of Yarra Ranges, Victoria, for some years now to assist the community with culturally sensitive and meaningful respite opportunities. Throughout our regular consultations, the community has identified an urgent need for respite among families with young, primary school-aged children.

Last November, Care Connect and the Yarra Ranges Indigenous Health team approached Edmund Rice Camps Victoria to establish an Indigenous Youth Camp, to be funded by Care Connect and supported by volunteer staff from Edmund Rice. Edmund Rice Camps have supported individual children and families from Healesville's Indigenous community in the past, and were eager to establish a targeted Indigenous camp with us.

The camp took place in April 2007 with 16 very excited grade 5 and 6 students from Healesville and Badgers Creek Primary schools and 27 equally excited volunteers from Edmund Rice attending. The highly skilled and extremely engaging staff formed instant bonds with the children; friendships had begun to develop before anyone had even made it onto the bus! The children participated in a range of activities, some of their favourites included trips to the beach, the overnight bush camp, swimming, football, table tennis and t-shirt painting.

Feedback received from all participants has been overwhelmingly positive. 100% of the children and families surveyed reported that they would like

to go again and a similar response has also been received from staff involved. It is hoped that this camp will become an annual event, with a 2008 camp focused on more cultural activities and information sharing to help all participants celebrate Indigenous culture.

When asked "What did your child tell you that they enjoyed most about the camp?", feedback from families included themes like, being with other boys, strengthening friendships, the activities, the leaders, being away and (repeatedly) "Everything". Families were also asked "How did the camp experience benefit the whole family?". The recurring themes included giving other family members a break, giving the kids a break, "... an opportunity for one-to-one time with other family members" and "opportunity for him to be his own person ... he came home more confident and feeling good about himself".

Care Connect and the Indigenous Health Team would like to thank Edmund Rice Camps for their support in making this camp happen and we look forward to working together on the Indigenous Youth Camp for 2008.



Care Connect Staff Conference

Each year Care Connect holds a staff conference for all 160 employees, with the aim of providing opportunities for both internal networking and most importantly, staff training and development.

This year, the conference was held in Melbourne to the theme of "A Fair Go". In addition to presentations from a number of staff speakers, several guest speakers also provided stimulating and challenging presentations on several topics. These ranged from complaint and conflict management (Peter Condliffe; specialist in aged care and health services disputes), to the level of fairness in Australian society (Andrew Johnson; Australian Council of Social Service), and coping with depression (Jeff Kennett; Beyond Blue). Also inspirational was the presentation by Lynn Palson, a founder of the Ménière's Support Group of Victoria in response to her experience with Ménière's disease which causes vertigo and loss of hearing.

Care Connect staff are overwhelmingly positive about both the professional and personal insights gained at the staff conference this year, and look forward to putting these into practise in our work with you.

For more information see:

www.mediateaustralia.com
www.acoss.org.au
www.beyondblue.org.au
www.menieres.org.au



CEO's Message

This is a winter message to all of you who are connected to us through our work and mission. In many parts of our country we have experienced a very long drought with its associated hardships. So much of our daily lives are under threat or challenge. Basics like water and its related activities, such as watering our plants and gardens have become difficult or prohibited in these times. Yet at the same time we are learning to value such activities differently, because they are scarce and we are now learning to live and work within new limits.

This experience is very relevant to us all here at Care Connect, where we recognise and accept the limitations of scarce resourcing. Our response is to constantly challenge and re-assess how we work, seeking not only to be more efficient (value) but also more effective (outcomes).

The pillars of our vision here at Care Connect are based on the application and use of new technologies, and around Research, Innovation and Development of new care models.

That is, how we will work with you in the future and what tools we will need to do this work. Such an approach is underpinned by a commitment we have to engage and consult with all our consumers and stakeholders.

Kathryn's article in this newsletter outlines the Strengthening Consumer Participation project already underway and some strategies for you to have your say and input into our work. Readers are welcome to provide comment to Care Connect at any time; please see the Feedback details on the back page of this newsletter.

Best wishes for your health and safety during these winter months.

Nicholas Woodlock - CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Building Bridges - Strengthening consumer participation

Care Connect is embarking in an exciting new era in its 12 year history by actively committing to strengthen its consumer participation pathways.

Care Connect now, more than ever, recognises the potential benefits of having consumers (clients, carers and community representatives) involved across all levels of the organisation and that when working in partnership this can contribute to the provision of high quality, flexible responsive services.

“Consumer participation” is increasingly being linked with improvements in the quality of health care and improved health and lifestyle outcomes. A strong body of research shows that when consumers are recognised for their unique expertise and where there are responsive and effective partnerships between consumers and professionals, the benefits contribute to improved quality of life and social adjustments for consumers.

The use of the word “consumer” is often a cause for much debate. Trying to find a word that encapsulates all the different groups – client, carer, community member, advocate, expert, person - is a difficult task and the word “consumer” seems to be the best of the bunch so far. In addition the word “consumer” is adopted by both government funding bodies (for example Department of Human Services in Victoria and Queensland Government) and community advocacy organisations (such as Consumers Health Forum Australia and the Health Issues Centre).

Over the coming months you'll hear more about the value of consumer participation and the ways in which you can contribute to improving the services you receive from Care Connect. This year will see the establishment a Consumers Advisory Committee, with representation by consumers and interested community members. Information about the project will be presented at our Community Partnership Meetings and in upcoming editions of Connections so please keep an eye out for these. In the meantime if you have any questions or would like more information contact Kathryn Olsson, the Project Coordinator, ph: 03 9270 9999 or email: kolsson@careconnect.org.au. More information about Consumer Participation can be found at the following links:

www.healthissuescentre.org.au

www.participateinhealth.org.au



NOTICEBOARD

New Payment Option

Care Connect wishes to advise all clients that a direct debit facility has been established as an option for paying client fees. The Ezi-Debit Request form is available from your Case Manager or any Care Connect office.

If you would like to take up this option, fees will be automatically debited from your nominated Bank Account or Credit Card Account every month, or as requested. This is a safe, secure and convenient way of making your regular payments. Once the automatic arrangement is set up, payments will be made without the need for you to take any further action. Any associated transaction fees will be paid for by Care Connect so that the direct debit option is available at no cost to you.

Unfortunately we are no longer able to take any type of credit card payments over the phone. While all other previous payment options are still available, we encourage you to consider choosing the direct debit option because of the many benefits such as no need to visit a bank, write a cheque or to remember to ring us every month.

Please don't hesitate to call the Accounts Department on Freecall 1800 116 166 if you have any queries at all, or to request an Ezi-Debit form be posted out to you.

Staff Profile



Kit Wong

As General Manager Client Services, Kit is responsible for four client service teams of 48 staff, delivering aged and disability services totaling \$7.85M, in the Eastern, Northern and Western Metropolitan Regions in Victoria. She is based at Footscray.

When Kit migrated from Malaysia in 1989, she found Australia's way of caring for older people different to Malaysia where caring for the aged and people with disabilities was the responsibility of the family.

Now after sixteen years in aged and disability services, Kit believes that developing countries can learn from Australia's experience as their population ages.

How long have you been with Care Connect?

Seven months. I was with Care Connect from 1998 to 2002 as a Case Manager and then Client Services Manager for the Opal team based at Croydon. I was keen to gain a different perspective at the policy and funding level and so from 2003 worked in the Department of Human Services. I was very pleased to have the opportunity to rejoin Care Connect in November 2006 as General Manager, Client Services.

Describe yourself:

Reflective, intuitive and pragmatic. Dry and wry sense of humour. I focus on what works rather what does not. I like results.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

Making a difference in another person's life – clients and colleagues.

Favourite things:

My grumpy husband and two uncomplaining children. Being pampered. Travelling. Good food. Blooming rose bushes.

Personal Philosophy:

How far you go in life depends on you being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and the strong. Because someday in life you will have been all of these.

GoldCare for our Clients

Care Connect has commenced working on the implementation of a new Client Database (an advanced and secure electronic system for working with client information).

Following a tender process, the successful tenderer was Campana Limited, well known to many providers in Australia as "GoldCare".

GoldCare is a web-based system that has many advantages for staff, clients and providers. Once established, we will be implementing an electronic invoicing system for providers to speed up the billing and payment process.

Also for clients we are hoping to be able to provide you with secure access to your own client information on the database via the web for checking of services that have been booked and your monthly rosters.

The Care Connect project team are working closely with the GoldCare implementation team to reduce the impact on staff, clients, carers and providers. The database will be implemented in stages, by training and implementing team by team across Care Connect. Care Connect locum case managers will be providing support for all clients and service providers during this time.

Prior to training commencing, we will notify clients and providers by letter regarding who to contact during this transition time. We aim to keep the impact on clients, providers and staff to a minimum. If you have any queries please speak to your Case Manager, or phone national freecall 1800 116 166, to speak with one of the Care Connect project team members.



How about that!!

Care Connect recently asked you to complete a Client Satisfaction survey. We wanted to understand what you think is good and what could be improved in how we deliver our services to you.



Firstly a big thank you to the 454 clients who returned their surveys; this return rate represents 37% of our clients registered at that time. We would like to acknowledge the time and effort of those who returned the survey. The surveys went to an independent research company who interpreted the information for us and this has provided valuable data which we will use to address service improvements where identified.

What are we doing with your feedback?

You were asked to score each question in two ways; 1) how satisfied you were and 2) how important satisfaction in the area was.

This information provides our organisation with some priority areas for improvement, and we have set about working out ways to do just that.

Each individual team at Care Connect has been given the relevant information based on the survey responses of that team. This is important, because each team's areas for improvement may vary.

Please be assured that Care Connect have taken your feedback very seriously and appreciate your comments, as we want to get better and more effective in these areas. It is intended that you will experience the benefits of these improvements in the very near future.

Swing and Dance with Sid

Sid Mann lives in the idyllic town of Pottsville, on the far north coast of New South Wales approximately 45 minutes north of Ballina. Care Connect Case Manager Grace Burgess met Sid and his wife Joan when Sid was referred by Tweed ACAT for a Community Aged Care Package.

Since July 2006, Care Connect has provided Sid with assistance in domestic tasks, garden maintenance, and transport on a regular basis. Due to increasing health issues, Sid has found it difficult to maintain his home and garden without this assistance. He says that having help has "made a big difference" and that he would struggle to continue living at home without it. Sid also adds that knowing there is the backup of services and a Case Manager in case of emergency is very reassuring.

Sid and Joan lead an active life and welcome visitors to their home on a frequent basis. They both ballroom dance at every opportunity, not to mention being ballroom dancing instructors themselves. Sid has been playing the cornet and trumpet for 74 years, and has even serenaded his Case Manager with a rendition of "Amazing Grace"! He attends

weekly band practice with a band who perform big band, swing and marching music. With this expertise, he, the band and wife Joan go to nursing homes to provide entertainment for residents there, but it is unclear who enjoys this the most - the residents, or Sid and Joan!

Sid says that his goals for the next year are to keep playing in the band and to keep taking his wife out for lunch! With Care Connect helping at home, Sid will be free to do all of that – and more.



Sid Mann and Case Manager Grace Burgess

About Care Connect

Care Connect is a not-for-profit and registered charitable organisation that supports people with complex care needs to remain living in the community, by providing person-centred case management, assessment, and brokerage services.

Care Connect was established in October 1994, with our first office situated in Werribee, Melbourne, and consisting of only three staff. Today, Care Connect has grown to approximately 160 staff operating out of 12 offices in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia.

Care Connect receives funding from State and Commonwealth Governments to provide case management services through specific programs. Our programs are available to:

- frail aged individuals who have complex needs;
- people with disabilities who have complex needs;
- adults with multiple health problems or dementia requiring input from numerous services in a coordinated way;
- families at risk of breakdown due to caring for an adult or child with a disability or complex care needs;
- carers are also supported by our programs.

A Care Connect Case Manager will access community supports and coordinate care services on behalf of the client, each of whom has been individually assessed with regard to their specific care needs. In addition, Care Connect also undertakes a range of contractual and private case management services. Contact us at any of the locations below.

Office Locations

NATIONAL HEAD OFFICE

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VICTORIA

CROYDON

16-18 Croydon Road
Croydon VIC 3136

PH: (03) 9724 1666

FOOTSCRAY

Ground Floor
75 Moreland Street
Footscray VIC 3011

PH: (03) 9362 8000

KEW

283 Cotham Road
Kew VIC 3101

PH: (03) 9816 9495

KNOX

Suite 404, 4th Floor
Knox City Shopping Centre,
Burwood Hwy
Knox City Centre VIC 3152

PH: (03) 8805 4100

LILYDALE

111 Main Street
Lilydale VIC 3140

PH: (03) 9737 6511

NEW SOUTH WALES

REDFERN

Suite 2B, 199 Regent Street
Redfern NSW 2016

PH: (02) 9310 3699

BLACKTOWN

16 Hereward Hwy
Blacktown NSW 2148

PH: (02) 9676 4685

BALLINA

Unit 7 / 2 Moon Street
Ballina NSW 2478

PH: (02) 6681 2400

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

ADELAIDE

368 Unley Road
Unley SA 5061

PH: (08) 8271 0099

QUEENSLAND

BRISBANE

Suite 18 & 19
Aspley Fountain Shopping Centre
1344 Gympie Road
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Thank you to the Care Connect staff contributors to this edition of Connections, including: Sherry-Ann Bailey, Grace Burgess, Sarah Creane, Graham Custance, Helen Douglas, Margaret Fouche, Simone Hamilton, Angela James, Jacinta Jubb, Suzanne McLoughlin, Kathryn Olsson, Dianna Taylor, Robyn Viney, Kit Wong, and Nick Woodlock.

Feedback

Connections readers are encouraged to make contributions and provide feedback.

Send your contributions and comments to:

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