

Annual Report
2004 – 2005

Celebrating 20 years of succeeding together

Schizophrenia Fellowship

OF NEW SOUTH WALES INC



Annual Report
2004 – 2005





The Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW Inc. is committed to improving the circumstances and welfare of people with a serious mental illness, their relatives and carers, and professionals working in the area.

The Schizophrenia Fellowship of New South Wales Inc will work to:

- eliminate stigma and create a society that is understanding and accepting;
- ensure people with serious mental illness, especially schizophrenia, and their carers and relatives have access to information and appropriate services;
- advocate on behalf of people with a serious mental illness, especially schizophrenia, their carers and relatives and mental health professionals for better government policy in the areas of research, treatment, rehabilitation, housing and other relevant areas;
- provide innovative programs and support.

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The Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW is supported by the NSW Department of Health and by private companies and company donations.

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Consumers, Carers, Mental Health Workers, Supporters and friends

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SUNFLOWER CLUBHOUSE CDO Christine Hunstdale (from 05/03/05)

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM Hiltrud Kivelitz

EDUCATION PROGRAMS Chris Taylor (until March 2005), Jane Randall

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Heather Matthews (from 30 May 05)

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR Angela Milce

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HUNTER REGION Natalie Joy

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SOUTH WEST SYDNEY Rosie Wildeisen

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JOB NETWORK PROGRAM

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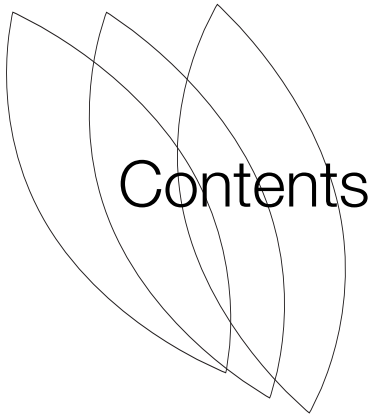
OTHER STAFF Editta Everett, Matthew Raymond (from 23/06/05)

AUDITORS

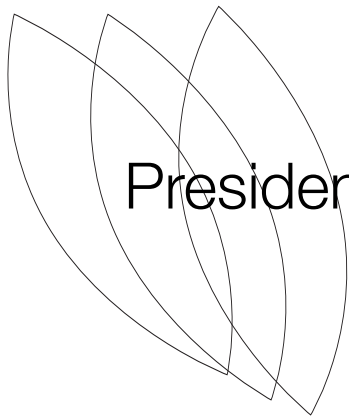
Wallace & Barrow

SOLICITORS

Mallesons Stephen Jacques, Blake Dawson Waldron, Robert Neely – Henry Davis York Lawyers



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President's Report

Judge Frank Walker



Introduction

The rapid expansion of the Fellowship activities and programs characterising my 2003 and 2004 reports has, if anything, accelerated in 2005. We again achieved substantial growth in areas such as service provision, infrastructure development and advocacy. However as Isaac Newton told us for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction and our dramatic successes have not come without considerable growing pains and mounting pressures to find additional funding to ensure the continuation of our programs. With that said I will now report on the highlights and occasional downsides of what was a very good year.

Agents for Change

Our Fellowship's prime function is to promote the interests of our consumers and carers to government and the general public. To that end we have strengthened our advocacy role by employing and resourcing our membership to become 'Agents of Change' campaigning within the community and more specifically in and outside the offices of our State and Federal Parliamentarians. Recent campaigns to list new atypical anti psychotic medications such as Consta Risperidal on the PBS have met with resounding success. Our long term campaign to increase government funding of mental health to decent levels has seen the establishment in both our Federal and State Parliaments of bipartisan committees of Parliamentary Friends committed to our cause. One of the most pleasing outcomes of that campaign has been the decision of the new NSW Premier Mr lemma to publicly commit his government to a better deal for people with a mental illness and actually established a new ministry for Mental Illness under the administration of Cherie Burton. 2006 will see new campaigns for our Agents of Change notably on issues such as Federal Government proposals to take large numbers of Australians off Disability Support Pensions. We look forward to your enthusiastic support as we hammer our case home to your local members.

Clubhouse Services

The past year has seen the resolution of many of the long standing concerns affecting Pioneer Clubhouse relating to its permanent home, management, building program

and employment service. Our development program for new clubhouses progresses with a long term lease being signed for premises at Wagga Wagga and good things happening at Wollongong and Port Macquarie. We see our clubhouses as the rock upon which our delivery of rehabilitation services to consumers should be founded, be they development of socialisation, living skills or training for employment opportunities. Our long term objective is to build a statewide network of clubhouses linked to both federal and state provided health services to assist consumers in recovery from and control over their mental illness.

Caring for Carers

Our popular Carers' Support Unit has had another great year. Like Clubhouse it has generated pressures from groups around NSW to expand the service and one of our most difficult tasks will be to convince our health bureaucracy which until recently has relegated mental health to its lowest priority to employ and train more workers. Hopefully the new Ministry for Mental Health will see some attitudinal changes.

Potential New Services

In the past the Fellowship has not had the human or financial resources to even contemplate providing clinical services for our consumers. However with critical shortages of psychiatric nurses and psychiatrists not to mention beds in our public health system our health authorities are now looking to the community health model originally proposed in the Richmond Report to relieve the pressure on hospital beds. Such models are in place in New Zealand and Victoria and are clearly providing a superior service to that endured by consumers in NSW. We are particularly impressed by the 'step up – step down' model currently being managed by our sister fellowship in parts of Victoria. Under this model consumer clinical services are for the most part provided in a community setting with arrangements for consumers to 'step up' to more intensive medical care in hospital as they periodically undergo bouts of psychosis.

FRANK WALKER

President



Senior Vice President's Report

2004-2005 has been another very busy year for SFNSW. We have grown in membership, employees, and activities and services provided. As our ambit has increased, the work of the Management Committee has too, particularly that of the executive, so much so that a second vice president has been appointed to enable it to fulfil the increasing demands upon it. Dianne Ross, a member of the Management Committee, was welcomed onto the executive as co-vice-president, and has been busy on our behalf ever since. One particular interest of Dianne's is the provision of respite opportunities for consumers and carers, and she has been exploring the possibility of obtaining permanent facilities for holiday respite for SFNSW members. She has been looking out for suitable premises that SFNSW could purchase, lease or use, independently or in collaboration.

I thought I would give a brief summary of my activities in the past year. SFNSW Vice Presidents are involved in the governance of SFNSW in addition to other activities. I attend Management Committee meetings, acting as default chairperson when necessary, and attend meetings of Management Committee subcommittees such as the Research Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Carers Unit Steering Committee, co-sign SFNSW cheques and documents and sit on SFNSW employment and staff annual review panels. I have represented SFNSW on our national body the Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia, visit support groups, attend functions on behalf of SFNSW and give talks to community groups. For example, this year I chaired part of our conference during Schizophrenia Awareness Week, and attended Law Society conferences and seminars, activities arising from the Legislative Assembly Enquiry into Mental Health. I attended the inaugural evening for POSIE, a new SFNSW group in the Hornsby area for post-natal depression outreach, and attended advocacy events. I also attended the wonderful residential weekend at Katoomba for consumers and carers organised by the North Shore Support group, and the Sunflower Club Cocktail party in Northbridge, and our annual lunch at Parliament House for Schizophrenia Awareness Week 2005.

There are many other organisations working on behalf of people with mental health difficulties and their carers as members know, and SFNSW is involved with many of these organisations. I act as an Advocate Associate for East Side

Alexandra Rivers



Advocacy. I am on the executive committee of the Mental Health Coordinating Council of NSW (MHCC), the board of the Neuroscience Institute for Schizophrenia and Allied Disorders (NISAD), and on the Centre for Mental Health (CMH), working parties such as the Carers' Working Group, and a subcommittee of this group concerned with mental health needs in Aboriginal communities.

The MHCC is the peak body in NSW for mental health NGO's. One of its projects in conjunction with the Centre for Mental Health is an NGO Development Project involving regular meetings of mental health service stakeholders, which I attend. Through MHCC, I am on the governing committee of the Consumers' Health Forum of Australia (CHF), the peak national body for consumers. This helps make sure that perspectives of mental health consumers and carers are represented as the CHF provides a consumer viewpoint on developing national health policy and practice. I am also a member of the CHF Consumer Representative subcommittee which selects health consumers for membership of various government and industry committees advertised in their newsletter and website.

NISAD is dedicated to facilitating research into why people develop schizophrenia (www.nisad.org.au), and is responsible for such research initiatives as a brain tissue bank and the establishment of the first Professorial Chair of research into the causes of schizophrenia in a southern hemisphere university. NISAD has also just launched a poster detailing the signs of schizophrenia in collaboration with the CMH, SFNSW and MIFA.

This is a sample of some of the things I do as a vice president of SFNSW, and it is only scratching the surface! I hope it has helped give some idea of the range of things the vice presidents and other Management Committee members do on your behalf. All members of the Management Committee, all volunteers, are similarly busy on behalf of SFNSW. The Management Committee supports our support groups and members, for it is they who change their communities and ultimately the system, and who are the dragon's teeth in the fight for a better life for people with schizophrenia and other mental illnesses, and their carers.

ALEXANDRA RIVERS

Co Vice-President



Chief Executive's Report

This year commenced the Fellowship's 20th Birthday and it also marks the 10th Birthday of Pioneer Clubhouse, the Fellowship's first funded service. This period is a time of the Fellowship coming of age, so it's a good time for reflection and future planning.

The Fellowship commenced as a grass roots organisation. The founding parents were predominantly carers and consumers with a couple of dedicated health workers. The desires and goals expressed at the first meeting became the Objects of the association which can be viewed by members any time they wish. Those objects focus on improving the circumstances of people with a mental illness and their carers through the provision of better and more services, more research and advocacy to achieve these aims. Over the years, little has changed with regard to these aims, except we are bigger and more able to pursue the goals that have been set.

Elsewhere in this annual report there is a piece on the Agents for Change. It is hard to put a true value on how important this group of people are. If the founders of the Fellowship had a dream about what would be the face of the Fellowship at the 20 year mark, they should have dreamt of the Agents. There has been a real fear in the past of standing up and being identified. Stigma has been great and it remains a barrier for many. Whilst this remained the case, we had no effective lobby and no unity of voice. I would strongly encourage the members to join the Agents if they have not already done so, and I would further encourage members and friends to encourage others who support our cause to join as well. There are many Agents who choose not to be members of the Fellowship which is fine as they add their voice to the growing crescendo for improvement. The Agents are a major change and a major move forward with our fight for equity and justice.

Alongside the Agents, there is a need to engage with politicians in a way that we never have in the past. To this end the Fellowship's national peak body, the Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia, worked alongside the Rethink partners to establish the Parliamentary Friends of Schizophrenia which most recently had 51 members from the House of Representatives and the Senate and is co-chaired by Dr Andrew Southcott, Liberal South Australia, and Senator Ursula Stephens, Labour New South Wales.

Rob Ramjan



The SFNSW has been closely engaged with the process, providing information, encouragement to NSW politicians and expertise to those who service the project. Engage, a newsletter for the Federal politicians, has been established and is published four times a year. SFNSW is on the editorial committee.

Also through MIFA, the SFNSW has been involved in the development of national policy which either has been or will be adopted by all MIFA members. The SFNSW, NT ARAFMI and the Mental Illness Fellowship of North Queensland, developed a rural and remote policy on mental health services which has been adopted by MIFA and now forms the basis for advocacy in this area. Currently SFNSW, MIFV and MIFSA are working on developing a very important policy document on prevocational and employment services for people with a mental illness.

This area of employment has become quite important to the Federal government. It has always been important for us so this gives a special opportunity to influence government policy settings. A group organised by SFNSW gave a day's briefings to Federal Members and Senators at the Australian Parliament in March 2005 that were attended by over 30 federal politicians. These briefings were organised by Mark Vaile, now Deputy Prime Minister.

At the State level, the Parliamentary Friends of Mental Illness was launched late last year with nearly one in four Members of Parliament as members of PFMI. The co-convenors of this group are our own Judy Hopwood, member of the Fellowship Board and Liberal Member for Hornsby, Arthur Chesterfield-Evans, Leader of the Democrats, Virginia Judge, Labour Member for Strathfield, and David Barr, Independent Member for Manly and long time supporter of Pioneer Clubhouse. Frank Walker and I both spoke at the launch. Dr Murray Wright, the Area Director of Mental Health for the then Greater Southern Area Health Service, gave a powerful presentation which identified many resolvable difficulties and illustrated the specific difficulties for our cousins in the bush. Dr Anthony Harris, a member of the Fellowship Board, presented with Jessica Rowe of television news fame at the last event of the PFMI. These two groups mark a true change in the place of mental illness in the political landscape and mark a coming of age as well. We must do all in our power to take advantage of the opportunity that we

have worked for and that now presents itself. The truth that is yet to be realised is that a targeted mental health vote will change governments.

An area of concentration for the Fellowship over recent years has been a presence in rural and remote areas. Although the Fellowship had a presence outside Sydney right from the start, this presence relied entirely on the work of wonderful volunteers who generally did their work quietly, without recognition and without support. We have done well in this area with staff now located in Dubbo, Port Macquarie, Newcastle, Campbelltown, Wollongong, Nowra and Wagga Wagga. We have taken an approach that requires us to provide on site contact on a regular basis with annual team meetings. We have also decided to follow a very firm community development model which requires empowerment of local people to manage the day to day activities of the service.

A major area of success in this year has been with media and raising awareness. Our partnership with Clemengers BBDO has been powerful and invaluable. We often use words like invaluable in this context and they are true as such expertise, support and assistance is truly beyond value to us. It is also true that we can put a monetary value of the assistance provided and that would be in the vicinity of \$150,000 without looking at the value of the free television advertising. This donation of knowledge, experience and skill is worth ten times the total grant money from the NSW Department of Health for Schizophrenia Awareness Week in straight monetary terms.

Then there are the many people who saw the adverts on television, who picked up the Avant Card at the café, who saw the 'Dr Jekyll and Dr Jekyll' poster, and who realised they were not alone and knew where to turn for information and assistance. Who can put a price on that?

The Fellowship's staff have grown in number and spread across the state. It is worth noting at this time of anniversary that there has been an exponential growth. In 1985,

there were no paid staff within the Fellowship, all were volunteers. By 1990 there was one paid member of staff and that person was part time. By 1995, there were five staff, three at head office and two at Pioneer Clubhouse, a fledgling in its first year. 2000 saw 17 staff and we now have over 40 staff. The staff are located across the state, but operate as a close team. Each member of staff has their own set of skills and commitment that they bring to the Fellowship's service and to each I thank you for the efforts of the last 12 months. There are a number of reports from the various Fellowship services within this report and I commend each to you. Each report reflects the achievements of the staff involved. It would be reasonable to mention every member of staff by name and describe their areas of work and their accomplishments but they are too great for the space available.

A fine leadership team has evolved within the Fellowship that places us in an enviable situation. The skill level amongst this group is quite exceptional. During 2004-5, this group was made up of Sue Sacker, John McAuliffe, Bill Gye, Natanya Mandel and myself. This group has a combined total of 131 years of working for people with a mental illness and their carers. Most also have very personal experience of mental illness. Each year I think how lucky we are to have such people and pray that they will all still be there the following year.

Finally I both need and very much want to thank Frank Walker. His insight and wisdom are both powerful, his experience and his tenacity are hard to resist, but it is his humanity and passion that both inspire and stimulate. His friendship is an added bonus. For all of these, thanks Frank.

I think we are winning the war. Things are improving but we must remain vigilant and active to ensure that the start continues.

ROB RAMJAN
CEO

“ My Fellowship



My personal vision is that one day all people suffering from this debilitating illness know where to go to get help; that there are enough services available to enable people to get well and get the most out of life; that people won't turn away from the illness, but instead offer understanding and support.

I know first-hand how far a little kindness and understanding can go.

James Bosson

Musician extraordinaire and consumer

”



General Manager's Report

Once again, it is a pleasure to report on the year's events from my particular perspective.

To say it has been a busy year is an understatement, but that seems to be the same every year. It is my privilege to look after some of our programs; including Helping Hands, the Telephone Information Support and Referral Service, Greater Murray Community Development Program, **Remind**, and the Carers Support Unit, as well as managing some of the smaller projects and some infrastructure issues at the Fellowship. On this latter aspect, this year, thanks to a grant from Janssen Cilag, we were able to install a server on our computer system at the Fellowship. This has made the system more stable and enabled us to keep our files tidier, and securely backed-up.

The smaller projects include a new partnership this year with Mental Illness Education – Australia (MIE-A) and the Transcultural Mental Health Centre (TMHC) to run the young writers' competition 'Through My Eyes'. This was originally an initiative of the TMHC, who were joined by MIE- A. It is not quite complete yet but we expect several hundred entries. I have been ably assisted (probably couldn't do it with out her) by Chong Vee Kee, a post-graduate student who has been volunteering with us this year.

Schizophrenia Awareness Week is held every year in May, and each year we aim to highlight an aspect of the illness to raise awareness and understanding of schizophrenia and reduce the stigma felt by those with the illness and their families.

The Fellowship attracts some very special volunteers and the team who contacted us from Clemenger BBDO were very special indeed. These individuals offered their time in the interest of raising public awareness of, and knowledge about, schizophrenia. From this excellent partnership came a range of products focusing on encouraging young people in particular to understand the early symptoms of schizophrenia and seek appropriate help. The products comprised:

- 4 Avant Cards
- 3 Television Commercials
- 6 Print ads

Sue Sacker



plus an excellent 'myths and facts' poster called 'Dr Jekyll and Dr Jekyll!'. In addition pro bono support from a media placement agency, OMD, ensured that the television commercials and print ads got plenty of exposure.

Every year the profile of **Schizophrenia Awareness Week** grows and this year was no exception. Activities included:

- Nearly 2000 information kits distributed to libraries, universities, TAFEs, community health centres, MPs, mental health services, neighbourhood centres, etc. across NSW
- An excellent poetry competition and entertainment afternoon (See Susie Allnutt's report)
- Our second Parliamentary Luncheon, hosted by Judy Hopwood, MP, with guest speaker Justice Marcus Einfeld
- School students selling Sunflower merchandise – ribbons, badges and pens – at various venues in Sydney, thereby raising funds for the Fellowship as well as raising awareness
- An excellent Symposium with special guest Gary Bond (see Pam Bruce's report)
- Activities such as dinners, information stalls, etc. in the Hunter, Shoalhaven and other places

Finding coded messages
in the newspaper?

Paranoia could be an early symptom of Schizophrenia.
If you're worried contact your GP or the Schizophrenia
Fellowship on 02 9879 2600 or visit www.sifnew.org.au

SCHIZOPHRENIA FELLOWSHIP

Awareness Week would not be so successful without our generous sponsors: Pfizer, Eli Lilly, Avant Card, Janssen-Cilag, Lundbeck, St. John of God Health Services and a grant from the NSW Department of Health. Awareness Week is a real 'whole of organisation' activity with all staff involved, our wonderful volunteers, including our very special Peter Bubb and Peter Strand. My thanks also go to Matthew Raymond, who worked hard on Awareness Week this year.

The **Supported Housing Project** has been underway for several years, but took a great leap forward this year when the Office of Community Housing allocated a site in North Parramatta for the project. The Steering Committee, chaired by Frank Walker, comprises family members, the Office of Community Housing, the Cumberland Housing

Association and our generous pro bono lawyer Michael Evers. A development application for 7 one-bedroom units and a meeting room has been lodged with Parramatta Council and we are currently preparing a prospectus for families who may be interested in the project; the basis of which is that families will be able to contribute financially to their family member's accommodation. The consumers who can rent the units will have some support from mental health workers.

My thanks go to Rob in particular for his support and patience, and to all the staff for their hard work and commitment of doing the best for all of our consumers and carers over the year.

SUE SACKER
General Manager



Finance Director's Report

In the financial year just completed the Fellowship was required to carry out capital works to satisfactorily accommodate our increasing staff and expanded services. As a result, and though the Managers of each of our services were generally able to stay within their budget, the Fellowship sustained a loss.

In the current circumstances, the generosity of our members, supporters and sponsors was vital in maintaining the loss at an acceptable level. Providing the Fellowship continues to receive this support in the next coming twelve months, the projection looks a little brighter.

John McAuliffe



I again acknowledge the very hard work done by our Bookkeeper, Barbara Kaminska in effectively carrying out the day-to-day maintenance of our financial transactions and Dinh Sievwright in her reliable calculations of salaries and associated accounting duties. Our Auditor, Terry Borella continues to provide his valuable support and advice in assisting with the financial management of the Fellowship.

JOHN McAULIFFE OAM



Volunteers & TSIR* Services

*Telephone Support Information & Referral Service

This year I have been involved in a number of projects with volunteers, carers and transitional employment personnel.

Telephone Support, Information and Referral Service

Increased advertising through local newspapers and liaison with Volunteering NSW has resulted in a steady stream of applicants keen to train for the Telephone Support, Information and Referral Service. Training was conducted in August and November 2004, and April 2005, bringing in an additional 25 new volunteers for the phones. Of those 25, 11 have since resigned, mainly due to gaining employment or taking on extra study commitments. We currently have 18 regular volunteers, with another 13 booked in for the next training session commencing on the 14th July 2005.

Feedback regarding the quality of service has once again been very positive and pays deserved tribute to the skills of our telephone personnel. Retention of volunteers is our most pressing concern. I am seeking to address this by advertising more widely for a mature cohort, with emphasis on commitment and reliability.

Outreach Program

There are currently 30 people on the program receiving regular telephone calls. This is an area which continues to grow and fills a need for friendly contact to break down the social isolation frequently experienced by people living on their own with a mental illness. Our volunteers can be congratulated for their ongoing support and friendship.

Newsletter

19 dedicated volunteers – some of whom have been with the Fellowship since it started – meet every couple of months to sort and wrap the newsletters for distribution. It is a pleasant, social way to spend a Wednesday morning, and provides a good introduction to The Fellowship. I would like to thank all those who have been assisting with this task.

Transitional Employment Program (TEP)

This program commenced in the second half of 2004 in partnership with Pioneer Clubhouse. The TEP provides supported workplace positions for people with mental illness who receive award wages and conditions. The

Susie Allnutt



Fellowship uses the position to train people in basic reception skills for a period of 12 weeks, after which they move on to another placement, or competitive employment, and another person starts in the job. A support worker from Pioneer learns the job and teaches it to the consumer, gradually withdrawing support until they are competent to perform the task on their own. My role is to supervise the consumer in their daily activities and provide support and feedback

Sandy Freeman was our first receptionist and she was followed by Bob Bowditch. We were recently joined by Sally Tamsett. I have found all our receptionists great to work with and derive much satisfaction from watching them grow in the role.

Well Ways Courses

Together with members of the Carer Support Unit, I had the opportunity to lead a group of 10 carers in a Well Ways Education Program at Summer Hill. The program ran for 8 weeks and was well-received. My thanks to Theodora Christophides, who assisted.

Creative Writing

In November 2004, I ran The Fellowship's first Creative Writing Group for consumers. This was an introductory 8-week program designed to explore ways of improving descriptive writing. Twenty-four people took part in the course. Of those, 15 contributed to the final collection which was launched at the Poetry Afternoon during Schizophrenia Awareness Week. We are grateful to Janssen Cilag and Hunters Hill Council for their financial support, in providing us with a grant. We will be running a second course in July/August 2005.



Volunteers' Christmas Party where a good time was had by all

Poetry Competition – Schizophrenia Awareness Week

Once again we had a good response from both metropolitan and rural writers, with 50 poets being represented. A great afternoon was held at The Fellowship in May, where over 40 people came to hear the winning entries, watch live performances (and vote for the People's Choice Award), participate in an impromptu Hiaku competition and enter the raffle for a giant basket of assorted goodies. The entertainment component is becoming so popular that one or two people had to be turned away this year.

I look forward to another year of growth, and involvement with our volunteers, consumers and staff.

SUSIE ALLNUTT

Co-ordinator, Volunteer Services



Our Hiaku Tree for the 2005 Poetry Competition



Telephone Volunteers

Avi Aronstan, Andre Ansari, Johanna Blows, Peter Bubb, Cassandra Cassis, Cecille Cavanna, Jessamine Chen, Vee Kee Chong, Lisa Curll, Blake Dear, Tania Di Palma, Larissa Engel, Lauren Gillett, David Gisz, Victor Greenwich, Anna Marie Hawkes, Anna Hi, Susan James, Danielle Keogh, Kate Laidlaw, Natalie Lam, Yen Lim, David Loncar, Ann Luong, Natalie Lysenko, Samantha McLean, Ian Mason, Suyen Moncada, Ethar Naif, Lee Mei Pok, Mary Ramjan, Matthew Raymond, Kanako Sando, Blanche Savage, Agnes Sayavongsa, Emma Slawitschka, Isabel Smit, Nicholas Stead, Tricia Stenning, Julia Stephens, So Yeon Um, Karen Varas, Yvonne Yoong.

Newsletter Volunteers

Diana Dallen, David Duvall, David Gisz, Irma McLaren, Anne McPherson, Leigh and Seymour Major, Margaret Merchant, Janette and Matthew Mitchell, Pam Pasut, Jane Rigozzi, Tricia Stenning, Peter Strand, Hugo Techera, Colin and Brenda Thew, Ray War, Donald Withers.

Packing Volunteers for SAW

Kevin Greaney, Mary Ramjan, Peter Strand, Ray War

Stamps Volunteers

Peter Bubb, Kevin Greaney

Media Volunteers

Ron McDougall

“ *My Fellowship*



I have been a member of the Newcastle Support Group for about 8 years. I am the social secretary for this support group. I have made many friends through the Support Group and I very much enjoy the social events that are organised by our group. I find I gain a lot from our regular meetings too and I value the support that I have received from members of my group, it has helped me through the harder periods of my life.

Kaz Francis





Events & Functions

Sunflower Club Cocktail Party

February saw the members of the Sunflower Club thanked for their ongoing support with a Cocktail Party which was hailed by all as a great evening. Stephen Mayers (from the Light & Hope Committee in Wollongong) and his wife Louise Haggerty kindly opened their home for the event; so we all gathered on this balmy evening on their beautiful terrace, to enjoy the company of friends and some light refreshments. Talks by Stephen Mayers and Alex Rivers highlighted the vital role the Sunflower Club members play in supporting our activities and how their financial support contributes to the ongoing programs run by the Fellowship.

Annual Symposium

The Symposium was very well attended again this year and I would like to say thank you very much to all the speakers on the day for their professional presentations: Dr John Basson, Statewide Director Mental Health, Jenny Barga, Director Youth Justice Conferencing, Dr Gary Bond from the US on Supported Employment, Bill Gye from Pioneer Clubhouse, Lynne Flemming from Progressive Employment Personnel, Michael Lodge from NUAA on harm minimisation. Our two consumers Diana Wilson and Mark McMahon with their very special personal journeys. Nickolas Yu from 'On Fire!', Deb Wilcox from NISAD and Bradley Whitwell on Early Intervention.

The feedback this year was very positive especially about the standard of the venue and catering, however most people wanted more question time.

The Symposium gave us the opportunity to focus on a number of critical areas for people with a mental illness. Employment is clearly on the Federal Government's agenda at present and there are both real opportunities as well as real risks for our members. The Criminal Justice system is very deserving of attention, especially when about 60% of adults going to reception have a history of mental illness and up to 80% of children in Juvenile Justice facilities have a mental illness.

Annual Parliamentary Luncheon

We held our second Parliamentary Luncheon on Tuesday 17th May in the lovely Strangers' Dining Room, overlooking the Domain. This is a really special venue, with the added

Pam Bruce



benefit of the chance of seeing (and talking to) the people who make the decisions in our State, several of whom attended our Luncheon. Judy Hopwood MP for Hornsby and member of the Board of Schizophrenia Fellowship, was our host, and we were also pleased to welcome Gladys Berejiklian, Member for Willoughby, who is the Shadow Minister with responsibility for mental health and Amanda Fazio, MLC, who takes a keen interest in our activities.

Our guest speaker this year was the Hon Justice Marcus Einfeld, who held the audience spellbound with his wide ranging and inspiring talk on human rights. Some of our other special guests were from Clemenger BBDO, whose campaign was launched during the luncheon.

The funds raised from the ticket sales and raffle were used to support the establishment of new clubhouse rehabilitation services in NSW. Our thanks go to the donors of the raffle prizes and all the people who attended the event, as well as Judy as host, Marcus as an excellent speaker, our friends at Clemenger BBDO and the staff of Parliament House Dining Room for their usual efficiency and support.

PAM BRUCE

Events/Administration Officer and Northern Sydney Carer Advocate



Gary Bond from the USA was our Guest Speaker on Models of Employment for the Symposium 2005



The Hon Justice Marcus Einfeld, AO, QC – Guest Speaker at the Parliamentary Luncheon



Minister's XI Cricket Match

10th October 2004

The heavens smiled yet again on our cricket endeavours and provided another beautiful, fine day for our valiant contestants in the Annual Minister's XI Cricket Match. Our venue this year was Petersham Oval, a picturesque little oval sheltered from the inner city turbulence by a garland of trees and bushes and the ideal setting for what proved to be a very happy and exciting day of bat and ball. The date, 10 October was also World Mental Health Day. The match was jointly organised by Aftercare, CAG and the Schizophrenia Fellowship. Petersham Oval is an 'A' Grade Ground and the spirits of great cricketers of the past were surely delighted by the display of determined cricket espoused by our worthy teams as they sought to make every ball count and every run a certainty. Amid cries of 'great shot' and 'well bowled' and the inevitable 'Howzat!' the players from each side did their best for their partners and their teams as they doggedly amassed their scores and bowled out their opponents.

All the players are to be heartily praised, not only on their cricketing ability but perhaps even more importantly on their sportsmanship. It was heart-warming to witness the two teams greet each other at the conclusion and congratulate each other on their fine performance. In the end, despite some fierce resistance by Aftercare, the Morisset team proved just a little too strong.

The game of cricket is much beloved by Australians who see it as a battle of wits as well as willow. The strategies of the game ensure no matter what the level of the player's ability his or her place in the team is always of vital importance. And the joy of playing together as a team, bonded by practice and vowing never to be discouraged by the cricketing fates, is a great tonic for the self-esteem of every player. On with the game!

Thanks to all who participated, the staff, the volunteers and of course the players. A special thanks to the President of the Committee of Randwick-Petersham Cricket Club and Marrickville Council for the use of their grounds and facilities.

BRENDAN KAVANAGH & JOHN McAULIFFE

Co-ordinators



Advocacy Program

One of the most exciting additions to the Fellowship over the last few years has been the Agents. The number of Agents is now approaching 500 and each and every one is dedicated and determined to bring change.

As noted last year, the Agents campaigned around two major issues, the rapid listing of an atypical injectable antipsychotic medication and an increase in the level of Federal mental health funding. The new medication became available early this year following approval by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee in May and Federal Cabinet in December last year. There is no doubt that the co-ordinated effort and the vigour of the Agents played a major role.

The other truly great indicator for which I firmly believe the Agents can take credit was the Federal election. That may seem a grand and sweeping statement and I'm certainly not claiming that the Agents influenced the outcome of this election. What I believe the Agents did as never before was to raise the profile of mental illness. Personal letters to federal Members of Parliament and Senators, personal visits and representations took us where we needed to go.

For the first time ever, both the Liberal Party and the Labor Party delivered a mental health policy and funding promises as part of their election campaigns. The voice of ordinary people can be and was heard. We have believed for many years that mental illness is an election issue at both the state and the federal levels. The Agents have proved this.

New campaigns have been prepared for the second half of 2005 that have been identified as having particular importance for carers and consumers.

ROB RAMJAN



External Committee Representation

Aspire National Planning Committee *Rob Ramjan*
 Australasian Clubhouse Committee *Bill Gye, Craig Scott*
 Bowral Division Of General Practice Mental Health Committee *Rosie Wildeisen*
 Canterbury Division Of General Practice Mental Health Working Party *Jan Doyle*
 Carer Support Network Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre at Oak Flats *Rhonda Benson*
 Carers NSW Statewide Carers Mental Health Reference Group *Heather Matthews*
 Central Sydney Division Of General Practice Mental Health Working Party *Jan Doyle*
 Centre for Mental Health Carers Working Group *Alex Rivers*
 Consumer & Carer Steering Committee at Shellharbour Hospital *Rhonda Benson*
 Consumers Health Forum of Australia *Alex Rivers* (Governing Committee)
 Family & Carers Committee, Carers Network, Western Zone, SSWAHS *Jan Doyle*
 Family & Carers Working Group, Eastern Sector, SSWAHS *Jan Doyle*
 Greek Welfare Workers Network *Theodora Christophides*
 Illawarra Rehabilitation Steering Committee *Sue Sacker, Katy Smith*
 Illawarra Mental Health Partnership Committee *Sue Sacker, Toni Garretty, Katy Smith, Rhonda Benson*
 Macarthur Division Of General Practice Mental Health Committee *Rosie Wildeisen*
 Macarthur Health Service Mental Health Community Network *Rosie Wildeisen*
 Mental Health Service Working Party for National Mental Health Week 2005 *Cindy Nielsen*
 Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia Board *Frank Walker* (Vice President)

MHCC Board *Alex Rivers* (Executive Member)
 MHCC Carers Working Group *Heather Matthews*
 National Association for Loss & Grief (NSW), Dubbo Chapter *Cindy Nielsen*
 National Wellways Steering Committee *Rob Ramjan*
 NISAD Board *Alex Rivers*
 NSW Mental Health Implementation (Pezzutti) Committee *Frank Walker, Rob Ramjan*
 NSW Mental Health Priority Task Force *Rob Ramjan*
 NSW Reference Group Clinical Standards for Schizophrenia *Dr Anthony Harris, Rob Ramjan*
 NSW Parliamentary Friends of Mental Illness Planning Committee *Sue Sacker, Rob Ramjan*
 NSW Juvenile Justice Consultative Committee *Alex Rivers*
 NSW Protective Commission Consultative Committee *Rob Ramjan*
 NSW Association for Mental Health Publications Committee *Rob Ramjan*
 NSW Clubhouse Research Committee *Sue Sacker, Rob Ramjan, Bill Gye*
 Northern Sydney Area Mental Health Service Community Consultative Committee *Sue Sacker*
 Northern Sydney Area Mental Health Service's Carer Strategic Working Party *Pam Bruce*
 Northern Sydney Carer Respite Service *Pam Bruce*
 The Maggie Project - Adult Acute Inpatient Mental Health Referrals Working Group, Hunter New England AHS *Natalie Joy*
 Through My Eyes Committee *Sue Sacker*
 Rural Mental Health Critical Care Pilot - Restraints Working Group *Gary Thomas*
 Wollongong Lord Mayor's Light & Hope Committee *Stephen Mayers* (Chair)

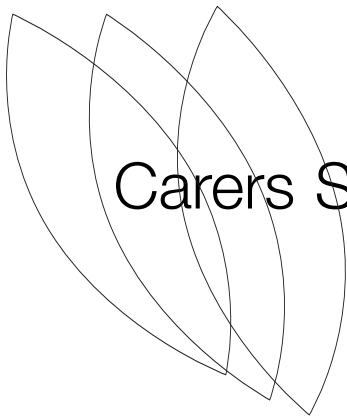
“ My Fellowship



I have also been thrilled to see and hear about members supporting each other in their difficulties as carers and consumers. It drives home to me the great value to be gained in working together in a worthwhile cause.

Bob Boss-Walker
 Chair of the Endeavour Clubhouse Committee

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Carers Support Unit

Heather Matthews



2004-2005, in contrast to 'another fantastic year' of expansion in 2003-2004, as Natanya reported last year, was one of consolidation and service development, as our four existing and four new Carer Advocates built on previous successes and grew the Unit's reputation for timely, targeted and effective support for mental health carers.

Our core business remains the provision of information, education, advocacy and support to carers, or rather to mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, mothers-in-law, friends and neighbours who care for and about someone living with a mental illness. Our statistics continue to demonstrate the community need for our service and of course the hard work of our Carer Advocates!

During the year, we had 675 new one-to-one carer contacts with 1386 follow up one-to-one carer contacts. As the life of a carer follows the carer life course framework so does the need for support. Quite often a carer will call a Carer Advocate to deal with an issue, be fine for six months and then call again as another problem arises. The spread of issues across our four main areas is: Information – 1212; Education – 421; Advocacy – 361 and Support – 1372. The number of contacts for 'Education' is in fact significantly higher, owing to the high number of face-to-face contacts occurring through presentation of Well Ways – approximately 1000 during 2004-2005!

Not formally recorded are the contacts which occur as a result of the various forums, seminars, committee meet-

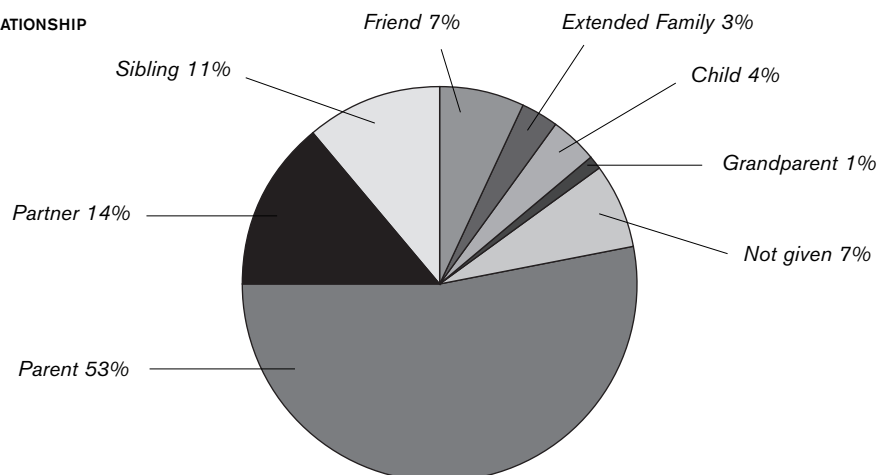
ings and working groups our Carer Advocates attend. We also host and attend carer functions throughout the year, especially during Mental Health Week, Carer Week, and Schizophrenia Awareness Week. Both of these un-recorded contact types significantly boost the actual numbers in the 'information' and 'support' categories.

The 2016 total one-to-one contacts over all areas are as shown below (an increase of 38% over last year):

Carer Advocates provide tailored information to carers depending on their needs and requirements. The carers are supported with telephone calls, meetings and referral to support groups and other services in their areas. Carers are supported in undertaking their own advocacy, thereby empowering them in their relationships with the mental health services. When necessary, however a Carer Advocate will provide advocacy to carers by attending meetings, assisting them to write letters or simply by making phone calls on their behalf.

Local resource centres, where carers can borrow books and videos and collect information on mental health and the caring role, continue to be an important and growing aspect of our service. All Carer Advocates now have a collection of information for carers, while several regions have developed, in partnership with other agencies, drop-in centres. These centres provide a space for carers to relax over a cuppa, access information and share experiences with other carers, in a private setting where their experiences are the norm.

FIGURE 1: CARER – CONSUMER RELATIONSHIP



There have been several staff changes in 2004-2005. In Greater Murray, we lost our Carer Advocate Andrea Kurta to the joys of motherhood in November 2004. Andrea left big shoes to fill and we thank her for her efforts. Dilys Warner took over in January 2005, and began to build on our strong community foundations. Unfortunately Dilys became seriously ill in May.

In Central Sydney, Julie Taylor left us in September; her replacement Jan Doyle started with us in December. Jan joined us after a major career change, from senior management in the health care industry, via a period of tertiary study. Jan is powering ahead developing strong relationships in her region, especially with various Divisions of General Practice.

In April our Illawarra Carer Advocate Toni Garrety left us for six months to join the Area Mental Health Service. Rhonda Benson won the locum position, from a carer support position with ARAFMI. Rhonda too has settled in well, and has already powered ahead with networking amongst other local NGOs.

Across the year and across the regions we've seen numerous exciting events, participations and developments.

In August we held a 'Grand Opening' for our office in Wagga, our second official opening. The Mayor of Wagga, Kerry Pascoe, and local MP Kay Hull have both shown a great deal of support for carers and for CSU. In September all Carer Advocates were trained to facilitate Well Ways, and from there six courses began in October – in Burwood, Campbelltown, Dubbo, Newcastle, Port Macquarie, Newcastle and Ryde – to complement three courses which began the year, in Summer Hill, Cessnock and Wollongong.

October brought Mental Health Week and Carers Week, both of which were marked by Carer Advocates across all the service areas. For example, in Wollongong Toni held a

Carers Luncheon, in conjunction with Wollongong City Council, Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre, ARAFMI, Illawarra AMHS and of course volunteer carers.

Also in Mental Health Week, Carer Support Unit won a 'Mental Health Matters Award' from the Mental Health Association of NSW, as did Toni Garrety for her individual efforts in Illawarra. Everyone in the Unit received a huge boost from the public recognition of our hard work and success.

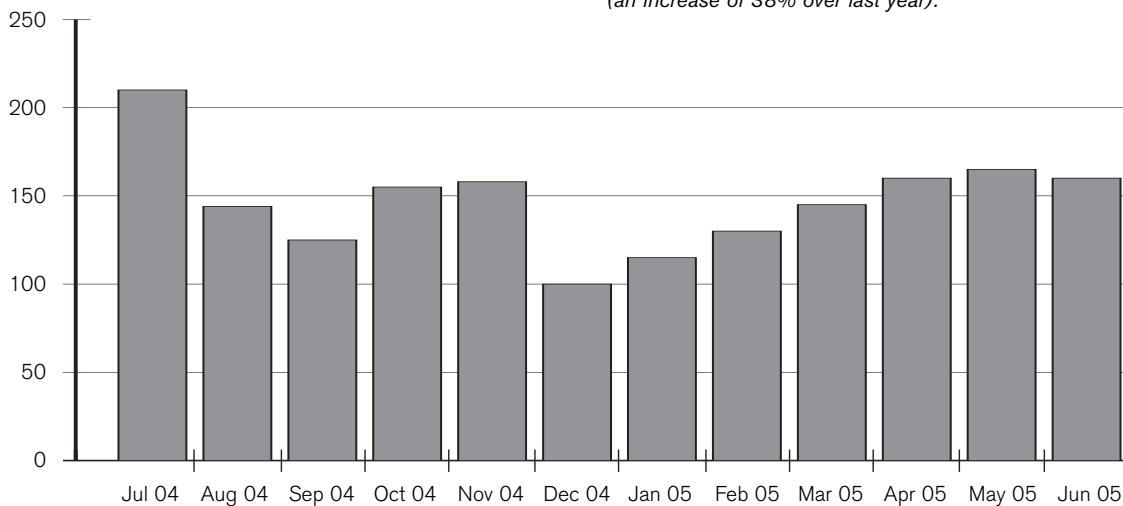
Late November saw the Northern Sydney Carers Christmas Function, a fully funded and catered event made possible by dedicated fundraising by our Northern Sydney Carer advocate Pam Bruce. A great time was had by all!

January saw two Advocates move into bigger and better premises, both co-locating with allied local agencies – Life Without Barriers mental health services in Newcastle and the Dubbo Neighbourhood centre, terrific examples of the opportunities for partnerships we're always searching for and grabbing hold of!

The big news in May was Natanya's preparation for maternity leave and the selection of her replacement. Having started the Unit, and worked so hard to develop the wonderful team, her departure on June 3rd was a very teary event. Nat has since become the proud mama to Dahlia Anne Mandel.

In general news, our Illawarra advocate Rhonda Benson has developed partnerships with several other carer services, leading to the formation of the Carer Support Network, meeting regularly to further develop carer support services, with a particular focus on older carers, a growing 'hot topic' in carer support. In Dubbo Cindy Neilson has been particularly successful in developing strong links with the AMHS, and now meets quarterly with all Team Leaders, to formally share information, encourage referrals and promote the service.

FIGURE 2: TOTAL CONTACTS 2004-2005 (EXCLUDING WELL WAYS)



The 2016 total contacts over all areas are as shown below (an increase of 38% over last year):

In Port Macquarie our Advocate Gary Thomas has been a member of the Rural Mental Health Critical Care Pilot, a project developing protocols and procedures to improve the transfer of consumers to gazetted inpatient units, as well as staff training packages in the management of acutely ill consumers. Once concluded, and trialled in Mid North Coast AMHS the program will be rolled-out state-wide.

A unique development in Northern Sydney comes from Advocate Pam Bruce – her annual Psychiatrist Education Session, where Pam gives psychiatrists the carer perspective on the development of their loved one's illness from first signs to diagnosis. Feedback from the participants has been universally positive.

Finally, in South Western Sydney Advocate Rosie Wildeisen has been very busy finding ways to cover her huge region. Rosie has negotiated solutions with local NGOs and Area services so well, she now has three offices – the main space in Campbelltown (at the Burnside Family Services Centre), in Tahmoor (at the community mental health centre) and in Mittagong, sharing space with ARAFMI.

The above is merely a snapshot of the wonderful work happening in all our service areas. All of the eight Carer

Advocates provide much-needed services with dedication, determination and above all compassion. And of course, we mustn't forget our most admirable Program Administrator Angie Milce who is the lynch-pin of the unit, and without whom we'd all be well and truly lost.

The final news is from Central Office. With pro-bono support from advertising agency BBK we are undergoing a 're-badging' process, finding a name and tag line which uniquely identifies us and our services for the future as we plan for expansion and ongoing service development. Once we settle into our new name, we move into preparing to apply for expended and extended funding to take us into 2006 and beyond.

So, as I said at the beginning, not so much expansion this year as consolidation and development. For me, new as I am to the team, I am continually impressed by the high calibre staff I am privileged to support and the inspiring carers and consumers we all support. I can't wait to see what 2005-2006 brings us!

HEATHER MATTHEWS

Acting Manager, Carers Support Unit

“ *My Fellowship*



Four years ago I heard Joseph Caruana mention the NOUS Support Group and he invited me to the meeting at Newtown. This is when I realised the importance of mental health so I continued attending the meetings and found that I could be useful to the support group. Approximately 3 years ago I became aware that there was a need for a Greek speaking person to translate the NOUS newsletter. By doing these translations I have come to appreciate the different problems that people with a mental illness face and the immense job that NOUS and the Schizophrenia Fellowship provide. I enjoy what I am doing because I help in providing a service to the Greek community and pass on information to people who need it. I intend to continue my support for as long as I am able to.

Agamemnon Petrofanis

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Well Ways

exclusive in NSW to CSU

Angela Milce



This is the second year that we have delivered Well Ways across all the areas with great success. Well Ways is a program developed by Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria (MIF Victoria) to train families, carers and friends of people with mental illness to care effectively for themselves and for their loved one with mental illness. The course includes up to date information about mental illnesses; information about mental health and services to support the carer; practical frameworks to improve communication and problem solving skills and practical insight into behaviours associated with mental illness.

We have now presented 19 courses with the twentieth underway, for a total of over 170 participants. Almost every course has ended with the participants arranging to meet on a regular basis thus forming their own 'support' group.

Two sessions of facilitator training were conducted so that we now have ten carers trained to co-facilitate as well as our Carer Advocates. Co-facilitators for 2004-2005 were Sue Ballard, Margaret Cunningham, Carole Myhill, Jennifer Seymour, Vera Spasosevic, Joyce Vernon, Jayne Wilson, Jane Woodall and Peta Woods. Their input is very much appreciated as without their assistance it would not be possible to present Well Ways. In particular, we thank Carole Myhill and Joyce Vernon who presented their course in Tamworth where we have no Carer Advocate. Pam Bruce, our Carer Advocate for Northern Sydney, visited Tamworth during the course to give them support and found that they were doing extremely well on their own.

The course involves 3 hour weekly sessions plus preparation time so that it takes a large portion of a Carer Advocate's three day week to facilitate. In order to run

these courses it has also been necessary for the Carer Advocates to obtain additional funding, a part of their day to day activities that they had not expected but one at which they proved to be extremely successful. We would like to thank the following for their contributions totalling \$17,481 for the year:

Auseinet, Cessnock Rugby League Supporters Club, City of Ryde, Dubbo RSL, LifeLine Newcastle, Mittagong RSL, Port City Bowling Club and Salvation Army Wollongong.

The overall success of the course is reflected in the following testimonial from Warwick & Bronwyn Kelly who attended a course in October 2004 :

The aspects that are most important to us which we acquired from your training course are:

- Reinforcing our belief that we have permission to not accept sub-standard services.
- Having most informative and clear handouts on mental illness issues.
- Our horizons have been broadened on carer advocacy.
- It encouraged and enabled us to develop links to services (networking and the information-chain).
- The empowering of other carers, by sharing perspectives and experiences.
- Providing us with the tools and self-awareness to make relationships work, and to repair/build 'bridges'.

ANGELA MILCE

Program Administrator, Carers Support Unit

“ My Fellowship



I have found that in our rural setting, lots of people for many reasons are aware of the need for services for people with a mental illness. Many are unable or unwilling to do anything publicly about the way they feel and their good intentions may never be realised. But if you can find ways to release this potential for support and show ways in which people can help, you can quite rapidly create a community feeling where taking action about mental illness is viewed as do-able.

Ray King

Chair of the Mental Health Fellowship of Wagga Wagga

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Greater Murray Community Development

The Greater Murray Community Development Program in Wagga Wagga has made great progress this year. If anyone is unsure exactly what we mean by 'community development' a trip to Wagga would be enlightening. The Branch adopted the name 'The Mental Health Fellowship' in September. The Branch has drawn together enormous community support for its activities, thereby raising the profile of mental illness and reducing stigma. Mental illness and the positive initiatives that can assist those living with and recovering from mental illness, have received extensive media cover in print, radio and television.

The Branch has three support groups, the Bidgee Group, a weekly consumer group, a Carer Support Group and the Support After Suicide group, both meeting monthly. Our thanks go to the leaders who are so supportive of their group members. Each group has a representative on the Branch Committee, which meets bimonthly. Also bimonthly is the beautiful Sunflower News, which has a very large circulation (over 350).

Clubhouse Development has been a key activity of the Branch, as Wagga has no psychosocial rehabilitation services and the desire for a clubhouse was brought to the fore very early in our work in Wagga. In October 2004, following the submission of an Expression of Interest, and with the support of State MP Daryl Maguire, the Minister for Lands offered us a lease on a building in Wagga. This building is well situated near the town centre and has enough space for a clubhouse and a cottage for overnight accommodation. The only problem was the condition of the building, very run down and dirty. Help was at hand, in the form of the TAFE, which runs a pre-apprenticeship building course. Well, at Sunflower House (as its future users named it) they have had plenty of experience – demolition, bricklaying, plumbing, plastering, digging, guttering, etc. We are eternally grateful to the TAFE, teachers Adrian and Paul for their excellent work, and to all the local businesses who have donated materials to the project, including guttering, locks, and windows ...the list is endless. A team from Wagga (thanks to Area funding) attended the National Clubhouse Conference in October 2004, which we all found informative and enjoyable.

There are five Rotary Clubs in Wagga, and all have come together, with the Quota Club, to support the renovation

The Sunflower House renovations in Wagga Wagga are well under way



of Sunflower House, donating so far over \$50,000. A truly wonderful effort.

Sunflower House will be finished towards the end of 2005. The third component of a clubhouse is the operational funding and this will come from State (rehabilitation funding) and Commonwealth Governments (employment funding). A formal submission for operational funding was submitted to the Greater Murray Area Health Service and this has been endorsed and submitted to the Centre for Mental Health. We have entered discussions with federal agencies regarding the employment funding and have received strong support from Kay Hull, the local Member of Federal Parliament. With all the support we have received, the increased funding allocated to mental health, and the excellent partnership we have with the Area Health Service, we are confident that Sunflower House will be open before too long.

Our staff in Wagga have undergone some changes this year. In March Christine Huntsdale resigned as CDO, much to the disappointment of everyone (except her family). However, Christine's commitment to the work of the Branch meant that she immediately volunteered for the job of Clubhouse Project Officer, which she has fulfilled since April, working 2 days per week.

The next year looks to be a very busy one again, hopefully with new services to offer the community. Our thanks go to too many people to mention, but I must single out Ray King, our Chairman extraordinaire, whose guidance, hard work and commitment are outstanding. Our colleagues at Area Mental Health are ever helpful and supportive and help to keep the partnership strong. Our thanks go also to Charles Sturt University, Daryl Maguire, MP and Patron of Sunflower House and Kay Hull, MP, TAFE teachers and students, Rotary, Quota, the Golden Gown committee, the supportive Wagga businesses, the Adventist Church, the Committee members, the newsletter team, the local media and many others for making the work of the Branch and the Fellowship such a pleasure.

Special thanks also to our staff past and present, Christine, Julie, Dilys, Andrea and Kim for their compassion and hard work for the cause.

SUE SACKER



Hunter Community Development

Re-establishing the Hunter Office

The office for the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW – Hunter Region moved in January from the Life Without Barriers office in Parry St Newcastle to the Life Without Barriers office at Georgetown. The facilities at this office are very beneficial with an area for meetings, training sessions, a resource room and much bigger office space. A volunteer program is in the early stages of being set up, which will enable us to better service the Hunter Region, as well as provide an opportunity for Consumers and Carers to be involved in the Fellowship's operations. The Hunter Office is supported by a Regional Steering Committee which continues to assist with identifying future directions for the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW in the Hunter Region.

Hunter Fellowship Newsletter

The Hunter Fellowship Newsletter is now compiled and distributed from the Hunter Office every month. Members are encouraged to contribute and regularly forward items for publication in the Newsletter.

Support Groups

The Newcastle and Cessnock Support Groups continue to have good attendance with growing numbers at each meeting. The groups leaders from Newcastle (Ian Walker) and Cessnock (Ruth Gorton) continue to do a wonderful job in not only promoting the Support Groups but with their involvement with mental health in the Hunter Region. Support group members in executive positions support the Group Leaders. Thanks need to go to Jenny Nichols (Newcastle), Janice Crawford (Cessnock) as well as other members of the support groups who put their time and energy into the Support Groups. The Lake Macquarie Support Group is about to be revamped, with a new location and time for meetings. In June 2005, Support Groups in the Hunter grew in number with new groups at Maitland (Group Leader, Helen Staines), Nelson Bay (Group Leader, Steven Jones) and Raymond Terrace. It is hoped that these groups will grow in the next twelve months, with all executive positions filled and the groups becoming self sustaining.

Education Program

Thanks to a generous grant from the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation the Hunter has launched an Education Program in 2005 which will address three key areas. An Education Program Steering Committee has been formed to assist with implementing the program.

Schools Program

The Hunter Education Steering Committee has met a number of times to discuss the direction of the Schools Program and how best to implement the program in the schools. It is aimed to have the Fellowship's Education Program in to Schools by 2006. Meetings have been arranged with various stakeholders, including the Director of the Department of Education in the Hunter. There has been positive feedback for the program and we are working with stakeholders to have it ready for implementation as soon as possible. The Hunter Office is also in the early stages of organising a conference for Mental Health Week 2006 in which school representatives will play a major role in the planning and organising.

Mental Health First Aid Course

The Hunter Office is now facilitating the Mental Health First Aid course, which was developed by the Centre for Mental Health Research in Canberra. This course is extremely valuable in promoting awareness of mental health issues and in turn increasing the mental health literacy of the community.

Consumer Courses

The aim of the consumer courses will be to provide information and training in areas which are beneficial to providing positive outcomes for consumers.

Schizophrenia Awareness Week

The events for SAW 2005 commenced on Monday May 16 with presentations by Associate Professor Ray Watterson and Mr Ian Walker. Ray Watterson spoke on Public Interest Advocacy and Mental Health, the Senate Inquiry into Mental Health and the Rau Inquiry (in which he was representing Cornelia Rau's family). Ian Walker spoke on his experiences living with Schizophrenia.

Sharon Grierson (Federal Member for Newcastle), Bryce Gaudry (State Member for Newcastle), Robyn Parker (Member of the Legislative Council for New South Wales), John Mills (State Member for Wallsend) and Dean Graeme Lawrence (Dean of Christ Church Cathedral in Newcastle) attended alongside approximately 60 people from the general public and other mental health organisations in the Hunter. The evening was extremely well received and a huge success for the Hunter Region Office.

Information stalls were set up at Charlestown Square, John Hunter Hospital, Green Hills Shopping Centre Maitland and Cessnock Shopping Centre. Schizophrenia Awareness Week concluded in the Hunter with a Candlelight Vigil at Christ Church Cathedral, which again, was well attended. Ian Walker (Consumer) and John Grieg (Carer) gave very impressive speeches on their personal experiences of living with Schizophrenia. The CDO also gave a short speech on her experiences working in the mental health arena.

Community Involvement and Mental Health Awareness

During the year the CDO has given talks to community groups such as Kaiyu Clubhouse, Church Groups, Schools, TAFE and other health professionals including the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Service. It is an aim of the Fellowship to take the issue of Mental Health out into the wider community to raise awareness and reduce stigma. The Fellowship in the Hunter is also a member of the Hunter Council of Social Services (HCOSS) and the Lake Macquarie and Lower Hunter Interagencies.

Partnerships with NGOs and other Stakeholders

The Fellowship has established working partnerships with other NGOs in the Hunter, including ARAFMI, Kaiyu Clubhouse, James Fletcher Hospital Consumer Unit, Morriset Hospital, Newcastle Mental Health Team, Maitland Mental Health Team, Nelson Bay Mental Health Team, Supported Recovery and other mental health facilities. The Hunter Region office has been involved in consultations with the NSW Liberal Party and the NSW Labor Party with regard to mental health policy, and has been an active participant in the Maggie Project, which investigated a patient's journey through the acute mental health care system.

Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW Consumer Contacts

As part of the CDO role, consumers are able to contact the Fellowship on a local Newcastle telephone number (02) 4960 3225 or by mobile 0423 767 468. Due to the

fact that there is only one employee in the Hunter Region, people often need to leave a message on the answering machines and those calls are returned as soon as possible. People in the Hunter still have the option of calling the Sydney office on (02) 9879 2600 or the Toll Free number of 1800 985 944. There have been approximately 32 new contacts from Consumers, outside of the support groups to the Fellowship Office in the Hunter from people who wish to obtain information and build further support networks and the CDO position is an excellent place for providing information, referral, support and advocacy.

Consumer Advocacy

There have been different types of advocacy carried out for consumers since July 2004. Examples have been issues including access to services, the criminal justice system, private psychiatry and access to treatments which have been cut back by the Mental Health Service. Sometimes advocacy is simply a matter of opening the communication lines, and in other cases it is a matter of the system not catering to the needs of the patient.

Directional Plans for 2005/2006

The new support groups need further development and support to make them sustainable groups in the Hunter region. In the next twelve months it is hoped that membership will continue to grow and a focus toward adolescent issues, which is a growing problem in the Hunter. It is anticipated that we will focus on adolescent issues in the Port Stephens area, which if successful, will be rolled out across the Hunter in the future. We also need to further determine and document the mental health needs of the Lower Hunter, as well as the Upper Hunter which we currently do not service.

We will continue to source funding for education programs, including the SKIPS program which targets year 5 and 6 children. Early intervention for mental health issues is shown to be hugely beneficial and the SKIPS program has achieved positive outcomes in Victorian schools where the program has been implemented, with a notice reduction in stigma and increased awareness of mental health issues.

The Education Program as a whole will be a focus of the Hunter Region office during 2005, 2006 and 2007 and as such we will look at best practice to implement programs which will improve outcomes for our young people.

NADINE FARRELL

Community Development Officer, Hunter Region



Education & Training Coordination Program

Remind
Training & Education

One of the key objectives of the Fellowship, and a driving force behind its creation 20 years ago, is to 'create a society that is understanding and accepting'. The way to achieve this goal is through helping people understand mental illness and be knowledgeable about it, thereby reducing the stigma and increasing support and understanding of people living with mental illness and their families. Therefore since the beginning Fellowship staff and volunteers have offered education and training in mental illness to a broad range of government and non-government agencies, schools, universities and clubs. In particular our outstanding volunteers, including Simon Champ and Sean and Kerrie McArdle, gave much of their time to this task. In recent years we have brought together the school education and the training sides of this work, which we have now named **Remind**, with its own identity and logo.

This is what our brochure says:

Remind is a service of the SFNSW, which is an established, community-based charity working to improve the lives of people living with mental illness, their families and professionals. The SFNSW has many years of experience in the provision of education and training to community groups, schools, professional groups, universities, etc.

One of the key features of **Remind** is the partnership between people with mental illness (consumers) and family members (carers) with the professional training staff. Talks by consumers and carers are a very powerful tool in helping people empathise with and understand mental illness and its effects. For this reason all of our training and education presentations involve consumers and/or carers. Some programs are delivered exclusively by consumers or carers.

Whether you are a school needing to teach your students about mental illness, or a service organisation trying to meet the needs of clients with a mental illness, or a carer who want to learn more to help you with their caring role, **Remind** will have a course that will suit your needs.

All our training and education work is tailored to the audience and special modules can be prepared and delivered as requested.

To discuss your particular needs, please contact Sue Sacker or Melina Tsembis on 9879 2600 or via training@sfnsw.org.au

Our consumer and carer speakers are a key factor of **Remind**, and their presentations are always very much appreciated and extremely effective. We conducted a 2-day training session for our consumer speakers in June, which was well received and hope to be able to run it again in the next few months

One of our recent training bookings was the Rural Libraries Conference, held in Gosford in July, where we ran a one day workshop for library and customer service staff. Jane Randall was the lead trainer, ably assisted by Simon Champ, who gave the audience a valuable insight into the use of libraries by people living with mental illness. Topics covered included Stigma, Core Knowledge of Mental Illness, Mental Illness in the Workplace, Dealing with Difficult People and the Services of Schizophrenia Fellowship. The evaluation of the day was very positive.

We have also formed a partnership with the University of Sydney School of Pharmacy, through which our consumer educators are playing an invaluable role helping community pharmacists and student pharmacists understand the views and issues of people with mental illness. This exciting project will be reported more fully in due course. Other training sessions have been held in universities, Lifeline, TAFE's, schools and hospitals.

Remind offers training on a range of topics, from Core Knowledge of Mental Illness, medications, mental illness and the elderly, stigma, legal issues, dealing with difficult people, employment and mental illness, etc. If you would like to receive an information pack please contact us.

Melina is taking special responsibility for the Schools Education Program, arranging speakers for schools, offering schools the School Education Kit, and encouraging them to participate in Schizophrenia Awareness Week. She can also arrange in-service training for teachers and school counsellors, who work with young people who may have a mental illness or be carers of a parent with a mental illness.

The work of **Remind** to date has been funded by generous donations from the Pfizer Foundation, the James N Kirby Foundation and Blacktown Workers Club. We are deeply grateful to these donors who have helped us establish **Remind**.

SUE SACKER



NESB Community Development

Frank Walker and Joseph Caruana, founder of the NOUS Group, as he receives his life membership from the Fellowship



Overview

NOUS has continued to grow and provide invaluable support to the Greek speaking community in this state. Joseph Caruana, his committee and Theodora Christophides and Joanna Terpollari, the NOUS staff, have achieved another year of outstanding outcomes.

There was a change of venue for the main support group, the establishment of a consumer support group which commenced in June and will meet at Marrickville and the start of two new support groups in the Eastern suburbs. Both NOUS workers continue to network with relevant agencies such as the Greek Workers Network and Transcultural Mental Health.

Nous Greek Housing Service

The accommodation provided by Cumberland Housing has been of great benefit to both Greek and non-Greek residents. Generally the houses are fully occupied and vacancy periods are very brief.

Residents

Consumers arrive at the houses requiring different levels of support. The service provided by NOUS is tailored to the needs of the new resident. The residents are visited weekly. This ensures that problems or issues faced by the

residents are addressed quickly, helping with the effective functioning of the houses. This weekly contact is adequate in preventing the majority of serious issues as they arise. The assistance of other services is enlisted to provide the support necessary for the residents affected.

Below is a graph showing the actual number of residents within the supported accommodation and their corresponding mental illness.

Newsletter

Communication within the NOUS group has been enhanced this year by publishing the newsletter with greater frequency. The newsletter is written in both Greek and English and sent to over 100 members. The newsletter is a vital component in establishing links between the members of the support groups. It provides information, educational material, a calendar of events and other social activities organised by NOUS. I would like to acknowledge the generosity and effort of Memo Mitrofanis in translating the newsletter every month for the last two years.

Volunteers

Volunteers continue to provide an invaluable service to the Support Groups and residents. An example of this generosity occurred during Schizophrenia Awareness

FIGURE 1: SHOWS THE PERCENTAGES AND THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF MENTAL ILLNESS EXPERIENCED BY THE RESIDENTS OF NOUS

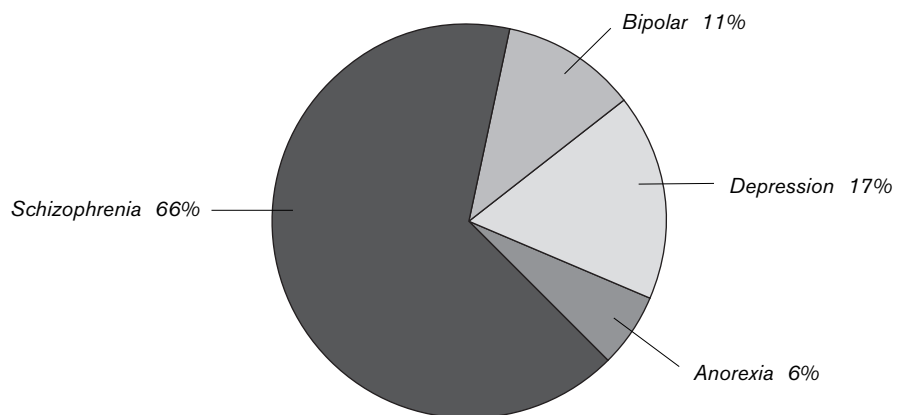


Figure 1 shows the percentages of the different mental illness suffered by the residents within the NOUS housing. Although the numbers are not large (18 in all) the pie chart highlights that the most prominent illness suffered by the residents within the NOUS housing is Schizophrenia (66%), followed by Depression, Bipolar and Anorexia (33%)

Week. For that entire period the Fellowship established a hotline for the Greek Community. The hotline was wholly manned by volunteers from the Greek Community. Whilst this was not successful we are examining the situation. In addition, the Greek community has generously donated furniture items to the residents for use in the houses. This is invaluable as the houses are provided furnished to the residents.

School Project

An exciting development within NOUS is the Greek School Project. The All Saints Grammar School in Belmore, was chosen to pilot our 'School Program' for

students - the aim being to assist students understand mental illness, and to take away the stigma associated with mental illness. The Parents session was well attended and well received and a follow-up session is in planning. The 2nd of November, has been set aside for staff from Schizophrenia Fellowship to meet with the staff, to discuss the school kit and our input.

This has been a difficult year for Joseph Caruana and we wish him well for his full recovery.

ROB RAMJAN, THEODORA CHRISTOPHIDES & JOANNA TERPOLLARI



ON FIRE ! has enjoyed another successful year, where many people have noted that we continue to grow and flourish. This success has emerged as a result of the strong positive peer culture and team of dedicated and talented volunteers that we are privileged to enjoy. One of the many joys this year has been watching some of our children and young people continue to develop in resilience and maturity. Another highlight has been that a significant number of new ON FIRE ! members has added further diversity to our group.

Some of the fun and exciting activities that we enjoyed this year included Australia's Wonderland, Luna Park, Taronga Park sleepover, picnic at Nielson's Park, and a 5 day camp at Forster Tuncurry. Throughout each of these activities our children, young people and volunteers have worked really hard to ensure that ON FIRE! provides

opportunities for peer support, life skills development, and leisure. As we pause towards the year ahead, to recognise and celebrate our achievements and the good times that we have had, we are being mindful of how we can continue to build on the strength of our success to date.

On a personal note, it has again been a genuine pleasure to be engaged with such a wonderful group of children, young people, families, and volunteers - and all this would not be possible without the strong support of the SFNSW and our generous supporters such as Eli Lily, Lions Club of Forster-Tuncurry, Rotary Club of Maroubra, and other private donations.

NICKOLAS YU

Volunteer ON FIRE ! Coordinator



Research Trust Fund

Over the past 12 months the Trust Fund has continued to progress with further generous donations continuing to flow into the fund.

During this year the Trustees agreed to a further grant to the University of NSW to enable Dr Colleen Loo to continue her study in Magnetic Brain Stimulation and a further grant was awarded to Western Area Health to further fund the study into Cognitive Remediation.

In the year under review there has been a successful book launch, 'A Window into Schizophrenia', by Rosalind Sharbanee Meyer. The proceeds from the sale of this book together with a steady stream of donations were credited to the 'Peter Meyers Fund'. Monies to the credit of this fund which have been set apart in our ledger, have now grown to a figure in excess of \$20,000 and will be distributed after consultation with the Meyers family, seeking their views regarding the management of the funds.

It is very sad to report the death of longstanding Trustee Gerald Smith since our last report. Gerald was a tireless worker for the Trust Fund and it was his wish that the Trust continue to progress and make regular grants towards research into schizophrenia.

For the coming year the Trustees will no doubt be seeking proposals for further grants to be made from the Fund. Your future support will enable the Trust to continue with these regular grants.

JOHN McAULIFFE, OAM

Treasurer, Research Trust Fund

“ My Fellowship



When I was working for the railways I used to find it difficult to manage my illness and the work demands on me. However after I was made redundant I realised how important a work routine was in my life. I feel it is necessary for me to be involved in some form of work as it helps me keep a balanced and healthy routine in my life. This is why I first joined the team at Pioneer Clubhouse and then joined the Fellowship as a volunteer. I have been active with the organisation ever since, helping out with various tasks around the office and feeling that I contribute to something worthwhile. For me the Fellowship takes on the true meaning of fellowship: It is a place where I feel I belong and where I have friends. The Fellowship also gives me the opportunity to socialise as the illness tends to cut you off from the rest of the world. It is good for me to meet up with other people who like me share the experience of living with a mental illness. I am very proud of being part of this great family that is my Fellowship.

Kevin Greaney

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Clubhouse Development Projects

The **Clubhouse Development Project** provides the Fellowship with the opportunity to work with local communities to develop new clubhouses and also to support and strengthen existing ones. The funding for the two-year project is provided by the Ian Potter Foundation, the South East Sydney Illawarra Area Health Service and the Greater Southern Area Health Service. The support of the area health services for clubhouse is particularly pleasing as they will have to provide the ongoing operational costs of clubhouses in their Areas.

Over the last year we have been working with communities in Wagga Wagga, Port Macquarie and Wollongong, with the recent addition of a very active and committed group in South West Sydney – known as the Beautiful Minds Community Committee. A lot of the progress in Wagga Wagga, where we will have a fully operational renovated building ready to open its doors by the end of the year. This will be covered in the Wagga Wagga Community Development report. However, I must commend the community of Wagga Wagga, particularly the Rotary Clubs, TAFE and local businesses for their generous support of the project.

Progress in Wollongong is also pleasing, with the City Council generously offering the Fellowship a 99 year lease on a large parcel of land in Unanderra on which to build the Wollongong Clubhouse. Fundraising continues for the project and the Committee, very ably led by the Lord Mayor, Cr. Alex Darling and Stephen Mayers, is determined to see the project to fruition so that people with mental illness in the Illawarra can enjoy the benefits of a clubhouse, helping them meet their goals, broaden their horizons and get back to work.

Endeavour Clubhouse development has also progressed well. Hastings Council has generously allocated land for the clubhouse. The members of the committee have continued their excellent fund raising activities and the local Rotary Clubs have been most supportive. Discussions with the Area Health Service have also been most productive. A community consultation hosted by Chris Crawford, Area CEO, and Dr Angelo Vigona, Director of Clinical Services, heard from many locals about the project.

The new clubhouse committee in the South Western Sydney Area is in its fledgling stages but full of energy and commitment. We are very pleased to be working with them, this is another area with a growing population, from

a great range of cultures and a shortage of services to meet their needs.

SUE SACKER

PIONEER CLUBHOUSE

On the first page, of the first Attendance Book for Pioneer Clubhouse, the date was the 20th of December 1994. Thirteen people attended on that day, including Nicky Hancock, the first Director – and a good time was had by all. Ten years later, the financial Year 2004-2005 was like one long 10th anniversary – party, party, party. Some highlights were the big 'Talent Quest' night in September at Dee Why RSL, the 10th anniversary Christmas Dinner; the 10 Year Anniversary Open-Day held in March that many members, friends of Pioneer and dignitaries attended, helped and presented at.

At that 10th Anniversary Open Day, the Mayor of Manly Peter MacDonald launched the draft plan and fundraising initiative for a new building to be built in addition to the old one that we will keep and renovate.

During 2004/2005 average daily attendance was 35, average hours attended for was 4.75 hours and on average 123 different people attended each month. Of the recently attending members 21 obtained employment and about 30 commenced some form of further education or training. We published and distributed to over 700 people, nine editions of the Pioneer Post Magazine and we cooked approximately 7,000 meals.

The combination of funding from the NSW Dept of Health, Job Network and the Personal Support Program (funded by the Commonwealth Dept of Employment and Workplace Relations) has worked well. The general clubhouse supports and assists members in general recovery and skills and confidence buildup; PSP assists individual members who are in difficult times and Job Network assists members to obtain and retain employment.

There are of course many people to thank and acknowledge, the members, staff, management committee, volunteers, the many friends of Pioneer, Manly Council, Balgowlah RSL, Warringah Council, the staff and management of Schizophrenia Fellowship and the carers and family members of members who have supported us.

BILL GYE

ENDEAVOUR CLUBHOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

In Port Macquarie, the Fellowship, including the local branch and the state office, have been working closely with the local Endeavour Clubhouse Development Group. A number of very positive meetings in mid 2005 with key stakeholders have us believing that our dreams of a Clubhouse in Port are not too far away from becoming reality. A large number of members and supporters attended a public forum hosted by Chris Crawford, Area CEO, and Dr Angelo Virgona, Area Director of Psychiatry, and put our views forward about future services for the area.

As the Chair of the Development Group I have been greatly encouraged by the fantastic effort that members have put into fundraising - countless hours selling raffle tickets and organising garage sales, not to mention lobbying at every opportunity. I am also continually encouraged by Rob Oakshotte, local member of Parliament and our patron, who has supported us from day one.

Much of this support is done by the stalwart older members who could easily be forgiven for putting their feet up and giving the game away. But the opportunity to make a contribution toward creating better opportunities for their sons and daughters keeps them going.

Our group has had great support from the local Rotary Clubs who have committed themselves to the establishment of Endeavour House. Strong support has also been received from local government which has allocated land for our clubhouse. We have enjoyed having Rob Ramjan visit us a number of times in the past year and we say a big thank you to him for his unsinkable enthusiasm and commitment to the cause.

We now can look forward to that continuing in the coming year.

BOB BOSS-WALKER

“ My Fellowship

I have been a carer for many years. This experience has been invaluable to me to perform in the position of Carer Facilitator of the Well Ways Course for carers in the Macquarie area. I gain a lot from this role as it puts me in touch with many other families who like mine struggle with the challenges of daily life as a carer. I also enjoy the empowerment the course gives to many carers and enjoy watching them grow and gain confidence over the weeks.

I am also a member of the Regional Advisory Committee for the Carer Support Unit for the Fellowship. I know first hand that this service is invaluable to many families caring for a loved one with a mental illness whilst feeling ignorant about the illness, isolated and worried about stigma. Carers deserve all the help they can get.

Sue Ballard

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SUNFLOWER HOUSE CLUBHOUSE DEVELOPMENT, WAGGA WAGGA

For more information regarding the developments with Sunflower House in Wagga Wagga, please refer to the Greater Murray Community Development report on page 20.

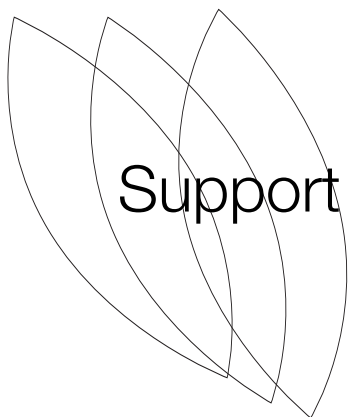
LORD MAYOR'S LIGHT & HOPE COMMITTEE, WOLLONGONG

The development of the Illawarra Clubhouse has become a truly community developed and owned project. The Lord Mayor, Alex Darling, has established the Light and Hope Committee which I chair. The committee is made up of many of the Illawarra's business, academic and social leaders.

The very good news to report is that Wollongong City Council granted a 99 year lease on a large plot of land in South Wollongong for the Clubhouse at a meeting in April 2005. Local builders and developers have given promissory notes of elements related to the construction and provision of services to the community. A significant amount of money has already been raised through a string of fund raising events and we are now gearing up for some major fund raising activities in order to fulfill the committee's intention to open the new Clubhouse on or before Australia Day 2007.

One of the very encouraging fundraising initiatives has been the release of a CD with songs recorded by a Wollongong mother about her son with schizophrenia.

STEPHEN MAYERS



Support Groups

Melina Tsembis



I have been acting in the position of support group coordinator since Scott Thompson left in November of 2004. The past nine months have been a wonderfully challenging introduction to the workforce, particularly into the field of mental health. Working with the support groups means that I have the somewhat unique opportunity to work collaboratively with consumers, carers and community groups to identify and best meet the needs of local areas.

At first the number of names and the knack that people at head office seemed to have of addressing everybody on first name terms was really daunting. How was I ever to have any idea who they were talking about? However, I have come to realise that this is the beauty of an organisation such as the Schizophrenia Fellowship – the fellowship really exists. I have not seen this reflected anywhere near as strongly as it is in the support groups.

I am going to briefly report on the support group program, as many groups have written their own reports, which are following. I would like to take this opportunity however to thank all the group leaders, committees and members who volunteer their time and energies on a regular basis. Without their dedication the program would never work, and many communities would be left without the invaluable support provided by these groups. Thank you.

At June 2005, there were over 33 support groups auspiced by SFNSW. (Fig 1).

A few new support groups have been started or joined the Fellowship. The work of Nadine and the group leaders

in the Hunter has meant that groups such as Cessnock and Newcastle have been strengthened. Nadine is also paving the way for the development of more support groups in the area, including Cessnock and Port Stephens.

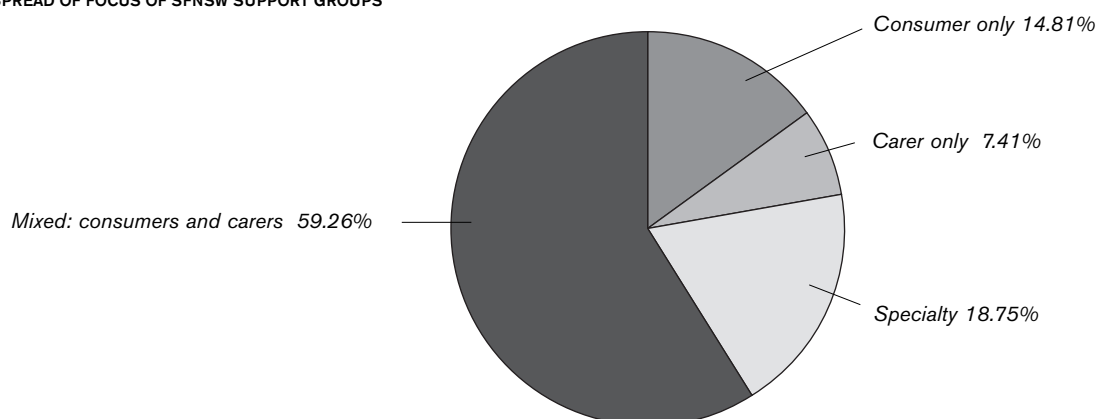
The group in Mudgee has not quite got off the ground yet, though there is still interest in the community and it will be a goal for the year ahead. A small consumer group from Pambula on the far south coast have joined us in the last year. I look forward to meeting with them in the next few months. An early intervention group for carers has been started on the Northern Beaches in partnership with Brookvale Early Intervention Centre. An adolescent group in the inner west of Sydney has been in planning for awhile, and hopefully will begin some time in the next year.

A new development in the support group program has been the emergence of 'specialty' groups. These groups are targeted at specific community groups. These groups allow the Fellowship to show our diversity of services and also allow these smaller groups to tap into our resources.

The first such group to join the Fellowship was the Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse group, based in Pennant Hills. The group has been meeting for 8 years and are continuing to provide support to women in need on the Upper North Shore. Their report is following.

Two specialty groups have been started on the Northern Beaches in partnership with Queenscliff Community Health and South Pacific Hospital. This group was started due to interest from a carer wanting more support for

FIGURE 1: SPREAD OF FOCUS OF SFNSW SUPPORT GROUPS



themselves in caring for someone with depression. As a result, two support groups have started – a Living with Depression Support Group and Carers of People with Depression Support Group. Many thanks to the local community, Queenscliff Community Mental Health team, South Pacific Hospital and Sue Sacker for getting these groups started.

Finally a very driven group known as POSIE have come on board early this year. POSIE (perinatal outreach information support and education) are a group of women (and the occasional male) who are aiming to provide community based support to families who are affected by post natal depression. This group is based in Hornsby.

As need in each community changes, so does the need for support groups. Some of the groups have found that they are waning in numbers, which although may seem unfortunate, is often a reflection of the changing needs of the communities. Hopefully in the year ahead, we will be able to spend some time focussing on these communities to assess what their needs really are and how they can be achieved.

Group leader training has been run twice this financial year with a focus on medications, communication skills and advocacy. A specific training session was held for the POSIE group leaders in June.

There has been much interest from various community groups who would like to see some time invested into setting up support groups in their areas. This is shown in Figure 2.

At the moment, we have 9 associated groups of the Fellowship, including a Spanish-speaking group. These groups allow both us and the associated organisations to take advantage of our combined networks, ensuring that communities have access to as many quality services as possible.

The year ahead is looking very exciting, with many new areas to explore, made all the more exciting as the new areas are not solely geographic.

My aims for the support group program in 2005/2006 are:

- To secure funding to provide community development in the Hastings and Port Macquarie area
- To continue to support and grow support groups, especially in rural areas
- To maintain a relationship with central Sydney in developing a support group for adolescents and develop a relationship in other areas of the state if the need arises
- To secure funding to run group leader training for all group leaders in the state To explore the options and need for online support mechanisms (eg support groups)
- To develop and foster partnerships with Health in Orange and Dubbo in order to meet expressed consumer need for support groups in this area
- To visit ALL the support groups in the state!

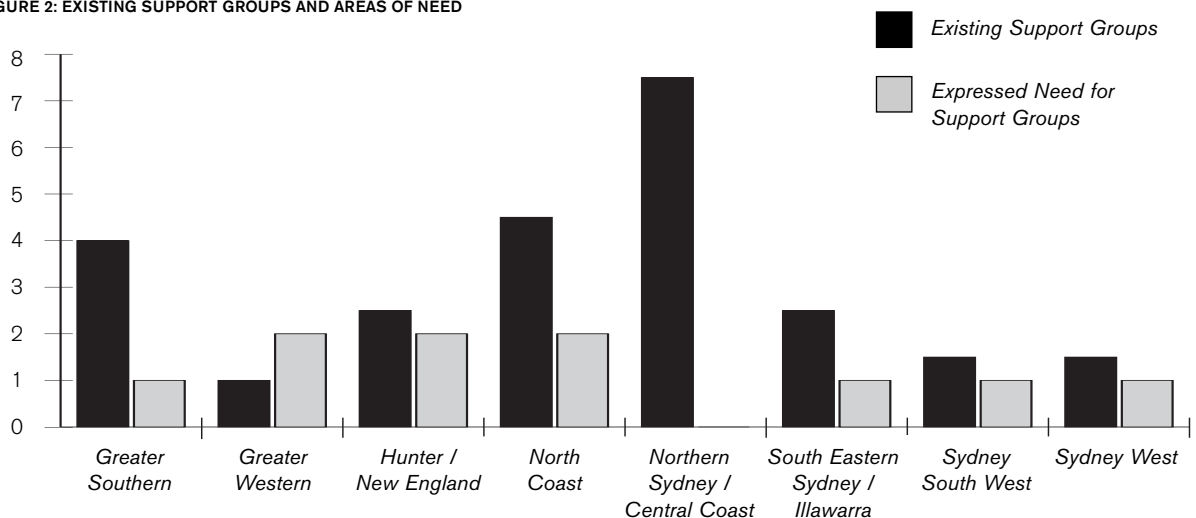
Again I would like to thank everyone involved in the Support Group Program, as without your dedication, the program would not be anywhere near as successful as it is now. Good luck for the year ahead!

MELINA TSEMBIS

Support Group Co-ordinator

Thanks to all the groups who submitted their annual reports (Central Coast, The Equalisers, Eastern Suburbs, Southern, Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse, North Shore, Northern Beaches, Cessnock and Tamworth). Due to restrictions in printing, we are unable to have all the reports included in the annual report. Following are a few reports, that reflect the diversity and importance of the support group program, and what can be achieved by working with the mutual support offered by support groups.

FIGURE 2: EXISTING SUPPORT GROUPS AND AREAS OF NEED



CENTRAL COAST SCHIZOPHRENIA AND BIPOLAR FELLOWSHIP

We advertised in our local papers for interested persons to meet at Kincumber Neighbourhood Centre in July 2004. The purpose was to support and encourage consumers and carers as they endeavour to understand and cope with the effects of mental illness. Enthusiastic members organised a committee and with the assistance of Head Office, the Central Coast Schizophrenia and Bipolar Fellowship was launched. With the support of members, ideas and plans were implemented, but more importantly, friendships developed.

Two street stalls in William Plaza, Gosford, have been very successful. Whilst raising funds, we also actively promote schizophrenia awareness. The response from our customers was phenomenal. A touching moment was when an elderly consumer lady who couldn't afford to buy a small item, while walking past the donation box, searched through her small purse and found a two-dollar coin and put it into the donation box. (We thanked the lady and gave her the item)

We are most grateful to the Newcastle and Cessnock fellowship for being so supportive and generous to our fellowship. Our well-qualified and hard working Treasurer, Conette Wheatley who doubles up as our media officer, organises the publication of our meeting dates in our local papers. Stephanie Wood, our Secretary, apart from keeping our minutes, also organises our guest speakers, and steps in as chairperson when required. The guest speakers have included Ms Dianne Oxborough, Clinical Nurse, Central Coast Mental Health, Jenny, Yakkalla House, Melina Tsembis, SFNSW, Marie from ARAFMI, and Lesley Nord, Consumer Consultant from Mandala and Wyong Hospitals. Members have also given valuable testimonies, which have been of assistance and encouragement to others.

Keith, husband of Stephanie is our Mr Energy. As he is a professional chef, he prepared jams and cakes for our stalls, and they literary sold like hot cakes. The committee members spent valuable time collecting merchandise, sorting and preparing for the Street Stalls, which commenced at 7am.

Through the connections and efforts of our member Bob Marsh, we received a very generous donation from CFMEU – Construction Forestry Mining Energy Union. Mr Andrew Ferguson, Secretary of CFMEU is aware of the plight of people with a mental illness, and on our behalf, he solicited an equally generous donation from Mr Lees of Expoconti Pty Ltd. The cheque presentation was at CFMEU's office at Ourimbah.

We have several goals, in particular, to have a Clubhouse similar to The Pioneer Clubhouse in Balgowlah – one day. Finally, a big thank you to all our members for their support.

THE EQUALISERS – KEMPSEY

The Equalisers began in February 2005 and comprises of approximately 15 members. We are more than a support group, we are a team of consumers who are working together to start a Non-Government Organisation which will cater specifically for the needs of people living with mental health problems in the Macleay area.

Our first meeting consisted of brainstorming ideas on the types of programs, services, groups and activities that we felt we needed, and that would assist us to gain a better quality of life. Everyone in the group would like to return to the workforce, therefore many of the ideas focussed on skills needed to get a job. We also came up with some money making activities. At our next meeting we discussed becoming auspiced by the SFNSW and held elections of office bearers, which are as follows, Cindi Rees, Group Leader, Lisa Powick, Deputy Group Leader, Donna Walls, Secretary and Annette Black, Treasurer.

Our first activity was to have a BBQ in the park. Even though it rained, everyone still enjoyed it with many remarking 'it's good to just get out and do something different'. We decided to hold a raffle in conjunction with Schizophrenia Awareness Week and were donated a lovely box of Nutrimecics, plus two of our very talented members donated artworks as second and third prizes. We made over \$140 for the raffle and sold \$130 worth of pens and ribbons of which we got half. Plus we were given \$200 as a donation, so from nothing we now have over \$400!! Not a bad start.

Cindi Rees had responsibility of three Welfare Diploma students last semester and asked them to teach a Volunteer Training course to the group. It was held over four weeks and nine members participated. They all enjoyed it tremendously, saying they gained real skills, which will not only assist them to be Volunteers, but also in every day life. Many thanks to our wonderful TAFE students, Amanda, Wendy and Skye, who did a great job.

The local newspaper is doing a story on us next week as we are desperately looking for a permanent venue at the moment. We are hopeful of a permanent venue as we need somewhere to meet, store goods, have a computer set up etc. Plus we want to put in submissions to get some funding and can't do that until we have an office.

Many thanks also to SFNSW for auspicing and supporting our little team for without you we would not be able to continue.

Love and best wishes,

THE EQUALISERS

SFNSW NORTH SHORE SUPPORT GROUP 2005

This has been a very busy year with regular monthly meetings, the Family Retreat at Blue Mountains YHA, October Spring BBQ, a great Christmas party, fighting to

save Chatswood and Cremorne Community Mental Health Centres and advocating through letter writing campaigns and numerous meetings and committees for improved services and funding.

Because of extensive renovations to our meeting venue, our meetings were moved into the church itself for a few months last year. Whilst inconvenient it proved worthwhile as we ended up with fabulous new facilities which we are grateful for.

We have had 11 monthly meetings with all meetings well patronised with an average about 30 people attending. Guest speakers included Tony Humphrey on Mental Health-Mental Illness; Trevor Booth, Public Trustees Office; Lyn Blaikie, Crime Prevention Officer, and Elsa Bernardi, Clinical Director Ryde CMHS; Judy Pickard, Illawarra MHS on Multiple Family Groups; Alan Rosen, Clinical Director RNSH and CMHS with Simon Richards GP Shared Care Coordinator/Service Support Manager and Darryl Hannon Senior Case Worker on Family Support Strategies in our area; Gladys Berejickian, Opposition Minister for Mental Health, Sue Sacker, General Manager SFNSW and Tony Humphrey, Chair of Mental Health Community Consultative Committee presented a panel for discussion; Dr Melissa Green and Dr Tamara Russel from Macquarie University; Lauren Malouf and Barbara Mulligan from STEPS; and Desley Casey, Consumer Coordinator of Northern Beaches Consumer Network and Consumer Participation Coordinator.

All monthly meetings end up with supper, an informal get together encouraging participants to learn to know each other. This is seen as a very important part of the meetings. Other meetings were our traditional Spring BBQ in October at Davidson Park which was well attended and great fun with games and good food and the Christmas Party as always was fun and a highlight of the year. The Family Retreat at Katoomba YHA was highly praised by all participants. Ten more people participated than last year, 19 carers and 17 consumers, total 36. The Northern Sydney Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre made the Retreat a reality for the second time by covering the cost of the accommodation. Without this support the cost of the Retreat would have been too high for consumers and most carers.

The proposed closure of Chatswood and Cremorne Community Health Centres was a major issue for the group this year. As CMHCs had already been closed quietly in other areas without any opposition, it came as a surprise to the authorities in our area that carers and consumers stood up to be noted. Local councils, media, Members of Parliament and other concerned citizens were lobbied to support the fight to keep community mental health services in the community and to stop the government from selling the 'farm'.

Intensive lobbying, a public meeting at Mosman, petitions and media with Alan Jones in the forefront resulted in meetings with Morris Iemma, Minister for Health. He ordered another public meeting and a working party be established as means of proper community consultation to take place. The public meetings recommended that the services stay on present sites and are improved. It was anticipated that the Working Party would be called together in February 2005. This has not happened yet.

Meanwhile Chatswood CMHS was stretched to its limits. Two mental health buildings at Hercules Street were closed last year due to the Accreditation team and Work Cover declaring them OH&S hazards. The Extended Hours team was moved to RNSH site whilst ARC team stayed in Chatswood. To enable ARC team to stay in Chatswood they took over part of Westview hence limiting consumer activities. Cremorne CMHC continued to operate as before. The threat to close community mental health services on the Lower North Shore and placing them at RNSH site against the wishes of carers, consumers and community representatives is ongoing. We must stay vigilant.

The Group's successes are based on team work, with many highly committed Committee members taking responsibility. Furthermore, numerous carers, consumers and friends of people with mental illness have all brought their own valuable contributions to support our cause. We have all the same goal and we all contribute with the time, energy, funds and skills we happen to have at our disposal at any given moment.

It has been satisfying to see more people supporting our activities financially either through donations or by bringing a plate for the supper in the monthly meetings, Spring BBQ and Christmas party. Commonwealth Carers Respite Centre Northern Sydney supported our Retreat whilst Commonwealth Department of Aging and Disabilities gave a grant for a printer.

I want to thank all people who have contributed to our Group's successes. There are some whose contribution has been exceptional. Leigh as Catering Coordinator and Treasurer with Seymour as Assistant Group Leader are an unbeatable team. Suzanne and Jeff in addition to looking after the library have helped with meetings and provided marvellous posters to advertise our meetings. Janet did a great job as the main Retreat organiser and presenter. Steven has become a visible Consumer Representative by providing music in our Christmas Party and leading a session on Life Skills as part of the Retreat program. I would also like to mention David, another consumer. It has been a delight to see him maturing, always willing to help wherever he can.

SATU BEVERLEY

North Shore Support Group Leader

CESSNOCK AREA MENTAL HEALTH

It is with great pleasure that I am able to report to you the achievements of our local Support Group over the last 12 months.

The 2004 AGM was held July 5th. The elected committee was Group Leader: Ruth Gorton, Secretary: Walter & Martha Kapcejevs, Treasurer: Janice Crawford

My personal thanks go to these people and of course many others who have given support during the year with fund raising, awareness stalls, attending public meetings, travelling to other areas for Awareness Week launch and representing our group at the Newcastle meetings, etc.

We can be proud of what we have achieved as a community support group. Our member base has increased particularly after Schizophrenia and Mental Health weeks in May and October. Media coverage and our awareness stall in the local plaza helped with this. I would like to thank Bruce Wilson and the Cessnock Advertiser for support in promotion.

We continue to receive calls for advice from members of the community on what services are available when they are faced with mental illness either as a consumer or carer. Sometimes the phone call is the only contact, if they act on the advice we give, we can only hope it has helped. Other times the call leads to a new member in our group and how daunting it is to come to meeting for the very first time. How lovely it is to see the new face for the second time at a meeting. I feel relief every time this happens. Relief that this person felt welcome and comfortable in our company and realise that they are with others who understand.

We have had less guest speakers at our meetings over the last 12 months than previous years. This was a decision made to allow for more of our meetings to be informal and allow more opportunities and time to mix and talk to each other.

Our thanks go to the following guest speakers:

John McAuliffe: Spoke as Finance Director of the Schizophrenia Fellowship and gave us some insight into the role the Fellowship plays.

Simon Champ: A consumer who over many years has been a strong advocate on breaking down stigma in relation to mental health.

Gordon Gorton: Spoke about his role as An Official Hospital Visitor at the 5 psychiatric hospitals in the Hunter.

Local born poet, **Peter Goldman:** Recited some of his poetry at a very enjoyable pizza and chicken social night at our April meeting.

Melina Tsembis: Sydney Support Groups Coordinator travelled up to address our meeting on what her job

entails with the Support Groups around NSW.

Pamela Ross & Mr Gane: From the local St Vincent de Paul Society, who were very keen to find out more about what we do in relation to support in the community.

Socially we have had two very successful dinner nights, one in which we had the Newcastle Support Group as our guests. In June we had a fund raising dinner at Maitland Tafe College, again with the company of members of the Newcastle group. This as usual was a great success. Thank you to Lynelle Skinner for organising this event for us.

Some members of our group travelled to the Newcastle Support Group Christmas party which was also a great evening where they had a bush poet entertain us. Special thanks have to go to Nadine Farrell and Natalie Joy from the Newcastle office for their support to the group. We really appreciate seeing Nadine as the Community Development Officer regularly at our meetings. This helps keep us in touch with what is happening in the Hunter area.

We received a welcomed government grant of \$900 with which we purchased a television/DVD/Video recorder. With the additional \$400 we purchased resource books and video from Sane Australia for our library.

As a group and as individuals we need to continue to do our utmost to educate the community and continue to strive at breaking the stigma associated with mental illness. If we are open and honest about it, then hopefully others if faced with similar circumstances may deal with it better knowing there is nothing to be ashamed of.

As group leader again a big Thank You to everyone. I know at some time over the last 12 months, everyone in this room would have given of themselves. There is however someone who has given an enormous amount of support not only in the last 12 months but as a formation member of this group, she has worked tirelessly. That is Janice Crawford. Janice has stepped down tonight as our Treasurer after 6 years. Thank you Janice from everyone for a job well done.

In conclusion, I would like to wish everyone all the very best and good health for the future and I particularly wish our new committee every success for the next twelve months.

RUTH GORTON

NORTHERN BEACHES MENTAL HEALTH GROUP

The group, which is a very successful, lobby, fund-raising, educational and support group, had another very successful year with our usual Schizophrenia Awareness and Mental Health Week stalls at Centro Warriewood Shopping Square. Their support has been invaluable over the years. Another highlight of SAW was the Pioneer Clubhouse Art Show held at Manly Art Gallery and opened by Mayor Dr Peter McDonald who has given so much support over the years.

Our attendance has been very good, depending on the guest speaker. Prof Vaughan Carr, Scientific Director of NISAD and Director Hunter Mental Health Services came from Newcastle in March to be our guest speaker, Dr Tony Mastroianni spoke on ADHD, Dr Andy Campbell former Director of Rozelle Hospital, Dr Glenys Dore on new medications, and the Northern Beaches Mental Health Services staff also spoke at various meetings. The wonderful Assoc Prof Dr Meg Smith OAM PhD was also one of our guest speakers. Meg was also the star of the recent Rotary Mental Health Forum held at the Dee Why RSL in November 2004 which I chaired. We have attracted new members whilst keeping our regular members who always rally around to man our stalls and help in various ways at our monthly meetings.

The fight goes on regarding our hospitals – Manly and Mona Vale. Federal Health Minister Tony Abbott is in favour of keeping both Manly and Mona Vale hospitals. Most of our mental health services are accommodated at Manly and Mona Vale Hospital would be the perfect site for a desperately needed psychiatric intensive care unit because of the shortage of beds in this area necessitating patients having to be transferred to Macquarie Hospital or even further afield.

Members of the support group attended the meeting at Balmain Town Hall to save Rozelle Hospital at Callan Park. The hall was packed, standing room only, and Alex Rivers, Vice President of the Schizophrenia Fellowship was also there. There is a crisis in the mental health system, with thousands of mentally ill in prison or homeless!

Congratulations to Leader of the Opposition John Brogden MP for appointing the Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP, State Member for Willoughby, as Shadow Minister for Mental Health Services. Gladys will be our guest speaker in August.

We were pleased to hear the Hon Justice Marcus Einfeld AO QC give a most moving and thought provoking speech at the Fellowship's Parliamentary Luncheon in which he criticised severely mandatory detention especially the incarceration of 81 children.

All the very best from the Northern Beaches – the home of our 'miracle in the community' – Pioneer Clubhouse.

PAT BOYDELL

Group Leader

SOUTHERN METROPOLITAN SUPPORT GROUP

Numbers are down for the Southern Support Group in 2005. We find that when things are going well for consumers they find other interests, and come back when they need help. We are always pleased if they are well and go their own way.

We do not have a formal meeting – talking over our prob-

lems, then relaxing over our supper is what appeals most to our regular members.

We do not have to pay for the use of the church hall where we meet, but make a small donation from time to time. Our funds are low but enough for our needs – the occasional theatre party keeps us above board.

Our close friendships are important and keep us together through thick and thin.

JOY CLOSE

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GROUP OF TAMWORTH AND DISTRICT

Noteworthy events of the last year include a memorable presentation on 'living with Schizophrenia' from a member, Simone. Welcoming her beautiful new baby daughter Mia, a few months after that presentation. Inspirational.

Sharing our annual review (or AGM) with a busload of visiting carers from Gunnedah. Knowing that another Support Group is meeting the needs of families just west of us. Having members enrol in a Seasons for Growth course with Centrecare. In March we welcomed Rob Ramjan to a well attended meeting and the talking went on for hours! Thanks Rob.

The highlight would have to be the Wellways Course which has filled our Thursdays for the last two months. Publicity for this brought us more new members and a very dynamic group resulted. Our thanks to Joyce Vernon and Carole Myhill who went willingly to the training at the Fellowship and slaved each week to get the sessions 'just right'! Also, going back to the beginning we are very grateful to another new mum, Natanya Mandel.

Natanya put in a submission to Aussienet for the funding to make it all happen. And thankyou Aussienet!

There is a lot happening in our Mental Health Service here and we are hoping for a busy and productive year ahead. A wonderful improvement has been the establishment of ten high support beds in the community which are managed by the Richmond Fellowship. We have enjoyed being involved with their staff training program.

JOAN WAKEFORD

Tamworth Support Group Co-ordinator

EASTERN SUBURBS SUPPORT GROUP

As the Eastern suburbs group meets consistently twice a month on a Monday there is always between 6-12 people at meetings. I have found that there is a very strong friendship between us as well as a common reason and enthusiasm to learn from each other and to help each other.

This is really a very special and beautiful thing to experience and be a part of and always interesting and positive.

I share the lead with 3 other people which definitely improves the quality of the service and as there are 4 different aspects of mental illness and mental health provided at each meetings everybody gets a good dose of information and look into what can be achieved and learned and experienced and what the problems are and where they come from.

We are an intimate group with varied nationalities and ages who come together for support, information, friendship and the common need to be ourselves. I believe there will always be a place and time for us to meet in the future as long as there is inhumanity and injustice and a lack of human kindness in the world.

And we would like the Fellowship to know that we are grateful and thankful and appreciative of their work and efforts and energy towards equity and social justice and rights and access for people who are burdened and unfortunate enough to be discriminated against and unfavourably treated and thought of in a stigmatic way.

ANN RENTON

ADULT SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEX ABUSE SUPPORT GROUP

Our group has been meeting for eight years and met weekly in different locations until we joined the Fellowship. Weekly meetings are now held at the Pennant Hills Community Health Centre with a core of five members and new members joining following advertising in the local paper and flyers on community notice boards.

We plan to present our issues to Gladys Berejiklian, Shadow Minister for Health. There is a need to recognize support groups such as ours, to bring greater attention to the issue of sex abuse and its consequences, and to advocate for access to professional support and counselors for people who have suffered childhood sexual abuse.

M ROSS ON BEHALF OF H MORRIS

“ *My Fellowship*



I have suffered from bi-polar disorder from the age of 16 and except for occasional severe episodes, sometimes requiring hospitalisation, I was employed as a clerk for over 20 years by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. When the ABC reorganised their operation our entire section was made redundant. Part-time work was hard to find but I still wanted to work so I approached the government agency STEPS which referred me to the Fellowship. They have employed me part-time for a year doing some database management and I appreciate their understanding of my situation and very much enjoy working with the team at the Gladesville office. I feel the Fellowship has helped me gained more self-confidence. It has also given me a sense of being part of a great and valuable organisation that gives a lot to consumers, their carers and families.

Robyn Minus

”



Helping Hands

Helping Hands is a Nowra-based volunteer service offering volunteer support to people with mental illness. The program trains volunteers who are then linked with individual consumers from Shoalhaven to provide support in a range of activities such as shopping, social and recreational activities, education and training opportunities.

This year's annual report starts with the good news that Helping Hands has secured triennial funding from the Illawarra/South East Sydney Area Health Service. We are very pleased and thank most sincerely all the people who supported Helping Hands in its struggle and, in particular the staff of the Area Mental Health Service who found the funding for the triennial grant. This is great news for us as Helping Hands continues to grow and to provide an amazing amount of volunteer support for the consumers in the Shoalhaven Community.

Volunteer Training

A group of six new volunteers were trained this year. Once again the training was facilitated by the staff of the Junction and Nowra Mental Health Team. Mental Health First Aid training was offered again by Jon Strang, with 14 attending from Ulladulla and Nowra. Volunteering Illawarra continues to provide excellent training to our volunteers. We are currently reformatting and reviewing the Helping Hands Volunteer Training Manual to ensure it is up to date and in line with best practice.

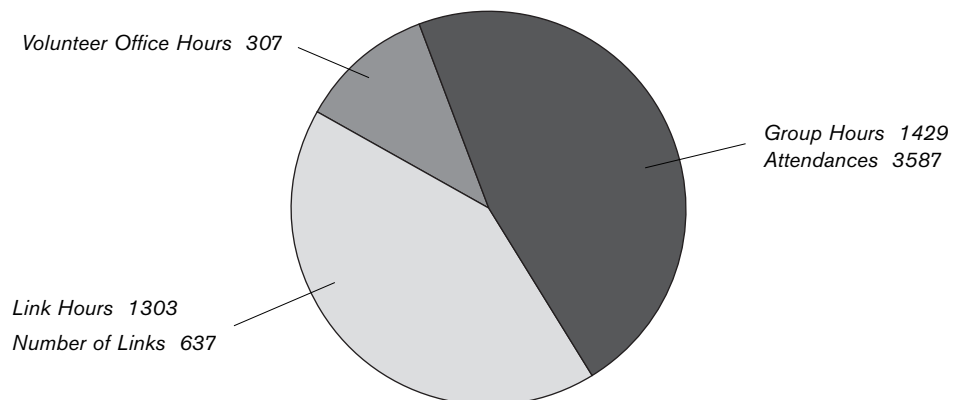
Media/Community Education/Awards

There were many articles and photos in the local newspapers promoting Helping Hands this year. This has helped foster community understanding and support for the consumers and volunteer recruitment. In the last year I have spoken to many different groups in the community and am pleased to receive great feedback for the program and the great work the volunteers do. The program actively recruits at the Local TAFE college and has been able to support students doing work placement. We also hosted several nursing students from Wollongong University.

The Shoalhaven City Council 'Volunteers of the Shoalhaven' booklet featured the volunteers who run West Street Sports Club. National Volunteer day Morning Tea was celebrated at the Junction in December. We attended the 'Mental Health Matters' Awards Ceremony at Centennial Park Sydney in October where 3 State Awards were won by people involved with Helping Hands.

A group of dedicated volunteers at Helping Hands won a Certificate of commendation for their innovative initiatives at the West St Centre. Maree Teychenne won the Consumer category for her Creative Writing Courses at the Junction. Damian McGill, a journalist, from the South Coast Register also received an award for journalism. The Helping Hands Programs were chosen Finalists in the 'Community Matters Awards' competition.

FIGURE 1: VOLUNTEER STATISTICS 2004-05



Statistics

A steady flow of referrals continues with successful links being created between the consumers and the trained volunteers. The main difficulty is always balancing the distance and locations of the volunteers and consumers. Helping Hands also gives volunteer support to the St Vincent's Farm for homeless men. The program continues to receive referrals from agencies other than mental health services.

The number of volunteers has increased as has the number of consumers who have links with volunteers. The statistics below show how much effort the volunteers put into Helping Hands; for example, in March, 18 volunteers provided 67 consumers with a total of 137 hours of individual support whilst 13 volunteers provided 315 consumers with 112 hours of group activities. The volunteers also provide between 30 and 40 hours of volunteer work in the office per month.

Events

The Helping Hands team participated in a Mental Health Week Expo + Stress Less Day. We were also very 'sporting' across a range of activities including:

- Sports Association Annual Tennis Day. Laurie Perkins, Ray Black and other volunteers ran the day where 66 players and 100 people attended.
- The Easter Show. 18 Consumers attended and everyone had a great day.
- Australia Day Award Ceremony - Laurie Perkins was the recipient of an Australia Day Award for his volunteer work at Helping Hands.
- Sports Assoc Table Tennis competition in Marrickville.
- Rozelle Writing Competition.
- Fishing Clinic Exhibition at Creswell Navy Base

- Canberra in November to see the sights of Canberra Travelling on the Nowra Ex-Serviceman's Bus.
- Holiday 18th to 22nd April to Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Camp. Travelling to and from by train.

Volunteer Run Groups

Our volunteers are a multi-talented crew, as are the consumers who participate, so we have been able to run a lot of different activities this year, including:

- Art + Craft Group
- Guitar Group
- Tai Chi at West Street
- Writing Group consumer run volunteer supported
- Care + Share Support Group
- Swimming Group in warm weather
- The Helping Hands monthly community outings
- Weight Management Program
- Walking Program
- Ten Pin Bowling Group
- West St Sport and Recreation Club run by the Helping Hands Volunteers

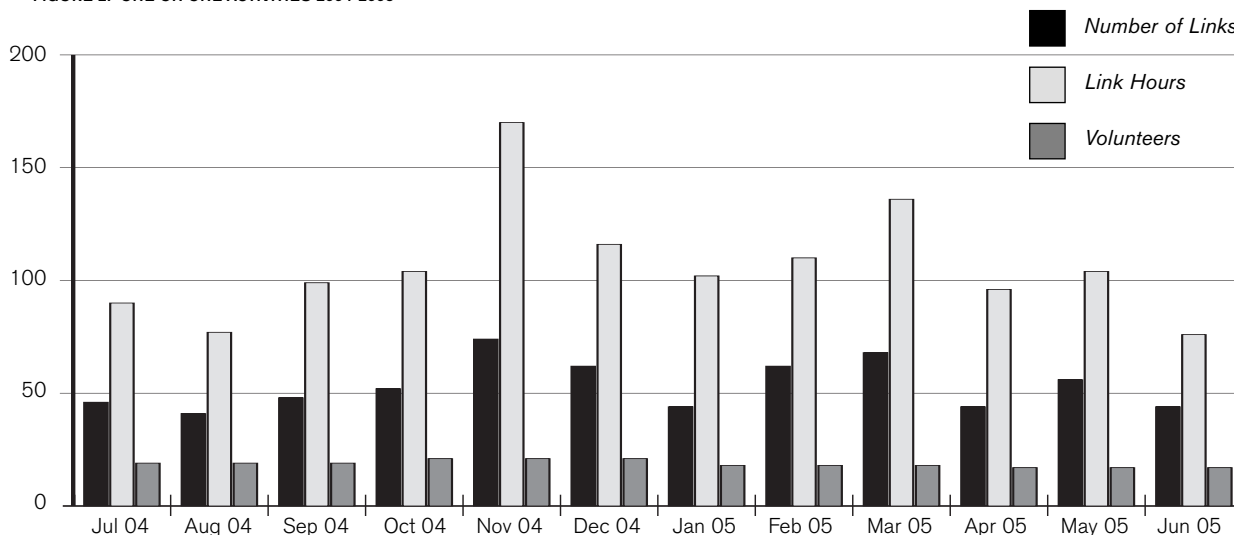
We are especially grateful to Bomaderry Bowling Club which has provided \$5000 for holidays. This year we went to Canberra and Myuna Bay, trips that were much appreciated by the participants, some of whom had not had a trip away in many many years.

This year, the same as last year I bemoan the task of having to write an annual report (any report for that matter) but what I take great pleasure in doing is thanking the people that make Helping Hands the program that has achieved so much, The Volunteers. These people are helping to change attitudes to mental illness in our community. Many thanks to my colleagues at the Junction, Nowra Mental Health and Sue Sacker.

KATY SMITH

Co-ordinator

FIGURE 2: ONE ON ONE ACTIVITIES 2004-2005





Donations & Sponsorship

This year's donations and support list is very abbreviated. We are unsure about the impact of Privacy legislation and are currently examining what is possible. There were well over 1,200 financial supporters during this period. Each donation is both treasured and a treasure that assists us to assist people with a mental illness and their carers.

We apologise for not listing your donation personally and hope to be able to find a way to do it again next year.

We thank you sincerely for your support.

ROB RAMJAN

Sponsors for Schizophrenia Awareness Week

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 Clemengers BBDO
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