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MDAA Newsletter

August 2007

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**by coming
to the office:**
Monday -Friday
9.00am - 5.00pm

40 Albion Street,
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NEW MDAA OUTREACH SERVICE

MDAA is happy to let you know about a new service called the Bega Valley Disability Advocacy Service, which is auspiced and managed by MDAA and due to start in September. This is an important initiative for people with disability and their families and carers living in Bega and surrounding areas. The service resulted from lobbying by South East Advocacy Services (SEAS) - a group of people with disability and their families and supporters in Bega - with support from MDAA's Advocacy in Action program. The service is funded by a 1 year grant from the Commonwealth Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA).

NEWS FROM CITY AND INNER WEST DISABILITY SERVICE (CIWDA)

In 2006 City and Inner West's consumers indicated in a survey that they lack knowledge about disability services in the city and inner west area and do not know their rights. In response, CIWDA produced a rights booklet which gives detailed and comprehensive information about the disability services available in the city and inner west area and the associated rights of consumers. To get a copy of this book call CIWDA on 9212-2020.

On Thursday 13 September CIWDA and the Sydney City Council are holding an information session about disability services in the city and inner west areas. The speakers are:

- Nicole Hendry, Education Officer, Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care (DADHC)
- Ken Thomson, Manager, Information on Disability & Education Awareness Services (IDEAS)

This forum is for people with disability, their family and carers. It will give you information about the services DADHC provides, as well as information on how you can find out about other services in your area.

- **Where:** Level 1, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney.
Sydney Mechanics School of Arts
- **When:** Thursday 13th September, 10:00am -11:30am
- **Cost:** Free! With light lunch and morning tea provided.
- **Transport:** If you need transport support, please call us.

Please call Chris or Viji on 9212 2020 or 9212 2048 to let us know you are coming or to get further information. We look forward to seeing you there!

CONSUMERS' CONFERENCE "PLANNING FOR YOUR FUTURE"

About 40 members and consumers participated in "Planning for Your Future Conference" at Parramatta Town Hall on Tuesday 24 July 2007. Katrina Clarke, President of the NSW Association for Children with a Disability, was the guest speaker and she talked about Disability Trusts.

Four workshops were also held:

Looking After your Money Matters - Therry Sorrell from Centrelink

Health Needs - Caring for Carers - Grace Chan, Multicultural Carers Development Coordinator of Carers NSW

Aids/Equipment and Modifications - Jaie Thompson Occupational Therapist from Northcott Society Outreach Team

Health Issues for People with Disability - Dr Marina Baita, General Practitioner of the Centre for Developmental Disability Studies

Talking about the venue, people who attended said that it was well situated and accessible - entrance, rooms and toilets - but it was also...*cold*.

Most participants considered the workshop contents very relevant and "the speakers were organised"; the hand outs were also useful. On the other hand some financial information was extensive and the time for discussion too short. One consumer said "*health issues were the best, because if I stay healthy I can help others*".

Some comments about the food: "*It was so good...because it was home made*" and "*can I have the cook's number?*" Dishes from Afghanistan, Turkey and the Philippines were served for lunch so everyone was back pretty happy to finish the day.



RACHEL LAZAROV AND ROBERT BRUNS: SYDNEY TO SURF RACE



Rachel Lazarov and Robert Bruns were in the City to Surf Race on Sunday 12 August. They were among 53,000 people who ran 14 kms from Sydney city to Bondi. "I was sitting in the chair, looking beautiful...and Robert was sweating and pushing" Rachel explained.

They were raising money for Giant Steps Sydney, a school where children and young people (2 -18 years old) with autism learn to communicate more effectively and integrate into mainstream schools. Rachel and Robert raised \$7,000 for Giant Steps. Congratulations!

CASE STUDY

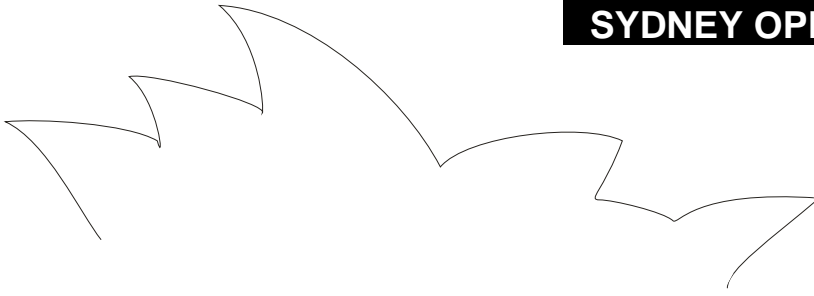
Ms Pedro has a mobility problem. Even though she has a Mobility Parking permit, she received a Penalty Notice for parking in a restricted parking area. Ms Pedro asked MDAA for assistance as she could not afford to pay the fine. MDAA wrote a letter of support requesting waiver of the fine.

The State Debt Recovery Office confirmed that the penalty notice had been issued legally and concluded that the penalty still applied. That left Ms Pedro with two options: to pay the fine or to write requesting a hearing in court. Ms Pedro wanted to find another way to challenge the decision so she asked for some assistance from her local member of Parliament. MDAA contacted the MP's office and assisted Ms Pedro to write to him requesting his support and enclosing some supporting documents.

MDAA recommended that Ms Pedro pay the fine while waiting for her MP, to avoid getting an enforcement order and added costs.

Ms Pedro's MP wrote to the NSW Treasurer asking him to waive the fine on compassionate grounds. Several weeks later she received a cheque for \$77. Ms Pedro is very happy with the result of standing up for her rights.

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CHEAP TICKETS



In order to broaden access to the Sydney Opera House through. Offering disadvantaged communities \$5 tickets to selected performances (*Refers to Concession Card Holders & Workers involved with individuals with cards). This is an exciting new pilot initiative which has been created to broaden access to the theatre and encourage those who've never been to Sydney Opera House before to come and enjoy a stream of productions. The generous support of The Balnaves Foundation enables Sydney Opera House to offer inner-city (and surrounding areas) communities \$5 tickets to selected premium performances throughout the year.

There are 3 ways you can purchase the \$5 tickets:

1. Direct through our box office with a credit card on 02 9250 7777 and ask for tickets to the BALNAVES performance of your choice. Tickets can be posted out or left for collection on the night.
2. In person from our ticket desk on the ground floor of Customs House, 31 Alfred St, Circular Quay, Mon -Sat, 10am-6pm.
3. Through Eva the Community Coordinator at

the Factory Community Centre, 67 Raglan St. Waterloo, on Mondays & Fridays 9am-5pm call first on 9698-3775 or 9698-9569

For groups (8/10+) or community bookings

1. Buy via email

openhouse@sydneyoperahouse.com - simply send details of the organisation name and contact person, show and number of tickets required with an invoice address. Full payment must be received at least a week prior to the event.

2. Buy tickets over the phone with our Balnaves Group Sales Assistant, Sveta Gilerman, on 02 9250 7812 (Mon-Fri only)

The capacity of the venues is quite small, and we have a lot of interest for the shows so recommend patrons to book as soon as possible.

Future productions (\$5 offer)

1. Daniel Kitson - The Playhouse, 19 Sept. 8pm
2. Rabbit! - Kids at the House Session - 11 Oct. 12.30pm
3. Babies Proms: Santa Babies 13th December Venue: Utzon Room

Transport

You may contact South Sydney Community Transport on 9319-4439

Major Religious Days

SEPTEMBER

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 1 | Beginning of the Ecclesiastical Year - <i>Orthodox Christian</i> |
| 4 | Krishna Janmashtami** - <i>Hindu</i> |
| 8 | Nativity of Virgin Mary - <i>Christian</i> |
| 12 | Coptic New Year - <i>Coptic Christian</i> |
| 13 | Ramadan begins - <i>Islam</i> |
| 13-14 | Rosh Hashanah * - <i>Jewish</i> |
| 14 | Elevation of the Life-Giving Cross - <i>Orthodox Christian</i> |
| 14 | Holy Cross Day - <i>Christian</i> |
| 15 | Ganesh Chaturthi ** - <i>Hindu</i> |
| 21 | Feast of St Matthew, <i>Apostle & Evangelist - Christian</i> |
| 22 | Yom Kippur* - <i>Jewish</i> |
| 27 - 3 Oct | Sukkot * - <i>Jewish</i> |

OCTOBER

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 4 | St Francis' Day - <i>Catholic Christian</i> |
| 4 | Shemini Atzeret * - <i>Jewish</i> |
| 5 | Simchat Torah * - <i>Jewish</i> |
| 9 | Laylat el qadr - <i>Islam</i> |
| 12-20 | Navaratri begins - <i>Hindu</i> |
| 13 | Eid al-Fitr - <i>Islam</i> |
| 18 | Feast of St Luke, Apostle & Evangelist <i>Christian</i> |
| 20 | Birth of the B'ab - <i>Baha'i</i> |
| 20 | Installation of Holy Scriptures as Guru Granth Sahib - <i>Sikh</i> |
| 21 | Dasera ** - <i>Hindu</i> |
| 27 | Reformation Day - <i>Protestant Christian</i> |
| 28 | Milvian Bridge Day - <i>Christian</i> |
| 31 | All Hallows Eve - <i>Christian</i> |

Note: * Usually begins sunset the day before; ** local customs may vary this date.

Dates and information largely obtained from the Interfaith Calendar (www.interfaithcalendar.org/2007.htm).

Detailed explanations about each holy day can be found on MDAA's website on the Frequently Asked Questions page (www.mdaa.org.au)

CHANGES TO ACCESS TO DENTAL SERVICES

The Association for the Promotion of Oral Health (APOH)
Chairman Hans Zoellner: hzoellne@mail.usyd.edu.au
Dental Medicare Provisions July 2007.

New Dental Medicare Provisions: An Opportunity For Improved Access to Dental Services. Current Dental Medicare Provisions

For some time it has been possible for medical general practitioners to refer patients to private dentists for Medicare funded dental treatment. However, this scheme has had very poor uptake, apparently because there have been two main barriers.

The first barrier has been the need for referral by a medical practitioner, and only under fairly specific circumstances. In brief, the patient involved must have a chronic non-dental disease to which their oral condition may be contributing. Examples of chronic conditions where this may be the case are diabetes, valvular heart disease, bleeding disorders, malnutrition, immune suppression, or mental health problems. The medical practitioner must then prepare a management plan and or a team plan, which includes referral to a private dentist to deliver the needed services.

The second barrier has been a very small amount of actual funding available to deliver the dental treatment once the patient has been referred. The maximum funding available per person over a one year period has been around \$240, which clearly is not enough to buy very much dentistry.

New Medicare Provisions for Dental Care

This budget saw removal of the second barrier to treatment, raising the amount of funding available per person per year to just over \$2,100. This should be enough to get people out of trouble and also support preventive dental health services for long term care. The new funding arrangements are to start around November 2007, and the APOH hopes there will be good uptake with significantly improved health outcomes.

The Federal Health Minister Indicates a Wide Interpretation of Chronic Disease is Appropriate

At a recent Oral Health Advocacy Day at Parliament House, the Federal Health Minister Mr Abbott foreshadowed expansion of dental Medicare, and also indicated there was no reason why the mouth should not be considered part of the body other than that this was the system the Government had inherited.

This view was confirmed at a subsequent meeting with APOH, while the above outlined expansion of Medicare suggests real commitment to improving dental Medicare access. We believe that the Federal Minister wants to see a very wide interpretation of "chronic disease" applied, and the extract copied below from an interview with ABC Radio PM on 9 May 2007 supports this. When asked what advice he would give Valerie Shorter, who extracted her own tooth because of an inability to access dental services, **Mr Abbott replied: "The person in question should go to his or her GP, have a full checkup, and I suspect that if this person has chronic conditions and poor oral health, it may well be that this person will go onto a team care plan, and under a team care plan this person can get very significant dental assistance."**

We suggest this is a green-light for a very wide interpretation of "chronic disease" to which dental disease may be contributing, and that medical general practitioners should feel confident in making most possible use of the new dental Medicare provisions.

(Note: For more information talk to your family doctor or GP)



CENTRELINK HELP FILLING FORMS

Centrelink provides form filling assistance to its customers. People can receive assistance by calling 131202 and speaking to our(language option).....speaking officer or come to our Reception counter at the office and ask for an appointment for form filling assistance.
Management Team, Centrelink, 251 Cabramatta Road, Cabramatta 2166

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR OR SPECIALIST IN YOUR LANGUAGE

What is the Doctors' Priority Line?

The Doctors' Priority Line is a free service for eligible doctors and specialists to help them communicate with patients who do not speak English. It provides a prompt telephone interpreting service for medical practitioners and their eligible patients. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, anywhere in Australia for the cost of a local call.

How can doctors access Telephone Interpreting Service (TIS)?

Doctors should call TIS National Doctors' Priority Line. A TIS operator will then give your call priority and connect you with an interpreter. You will be asked for your name and Medicare provider number. You can also arrange a pre-booked telephone interpreting service (ph 1300 131 450 and fill in a form).

Which doctors and patients are eligible?

Any doctor who meets the following criteria can use the service: the doctor must be consulting as a medical practitioner in private practice; the consultation must be claimable under Medicare (excluding treatment covered by compensation cases); and the service must be provided to a permanent resident or Australian citizen who does not speak English.

Benefits of using the Doctors' Priority Line:

* calls are given priority: an interpreter will generally be provided within three minutes (for major community languages);

* doctors can use the line to get interpreters straight away or to book a telephone interpreting service for a later time;

* it is a fee-free service, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across Australia for the cost of a local call;

* it provides access to a national pool of approximately 2000 qualified interpreters - not just those available in your immediate area - doctors in regional and remote areas are able to access the service as easily as those in metropolitan areas - all you need is a hands-free telephone; and

* most of all it provides the patient with greater privacy.

What is the interpreter's role?

The interpreter's job is to facilitate accurate communication with people who do not speak English, or whose English is not adequate.

Interpreters are bound by a professional code of ethics which requires them to:

- interpret information accurately and honestly without adding or omitting anything being said;
- maintain absolute confidentiality;
- be impartial and objective; and
- act in a professional manner at all times

TIS policy is to use accredited interpreters in most circumstances.

Doctors' Priority Line, phone: 1300 131 450
(Taken from DIMA website)

CHEAP COMPUTER SYSTEMS

Westpac Bank, Workventures and Microsoft Unlimited Potential are offering affordable computer systems. To be eligible to buy a computer system, customers must hold a current Centrelink Health Care Card, Age Pension Card, Disability Pension Card or some other document which show low income or disadvantage. For an organisation to be eligible it must be a non-profit organisation, educational institution, church, charity or community group. To order a computer system a person must provide a copy of their benefits/pension card, and an organisation must provide a valid ACN/ABN.
For more information call Free Toll number 1800-112-205.