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MDAA Newsletter

February 2008

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## MDAA FAREWELL TO BARBEL AND MAUREEN

After long serving careers at MDAA, we farewell two leaders, Barbel and Maureen, who supported many of our employees and created lots of opportunities for the organisation.

Barbel Winter is leaving after 11 years of service as the Executive Director of MDAA. She is looking forward to exploring New Zealand.

She managed the organisation with expertise and efficiency. MDAA grew to prominence with her untiring lobbying and advocacy.

Maureen Kingshott worked in many positions for government and non-government organisations. She was the Assistant Director at MDAA for 6 years. While working at MDAA she supported many people and says she learnt heaps and ate lots.

Barbel and Maureen will both be greatly missed, and on behalf of MDAA staff, Committee, MDAA members and consumers, we wish them good luck and more success for the future.



## WELCOME TO DIANA

We are very happy to welcome Diana Qian in her new role as Executive Director. Diana has advocated for people from diverse backgrounds with disability for many years, as a former Chairperson and Assistant Director of MDAA and through the National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA), the NSW Council for Intellectual Disability (CID), People With Disability Australia (PWD), and the NSW Disability Council. (more welcomes on page 3)



## WHAT IS ADVOCACY WORKSHOP

Twelve participants attended the training workshop on "What is Advocacy?" held at MDAA on 21 February 2008. In my view the workshop was very beneficial as I learnt that each client's case is individual and it helped me realise that in some cases if you have personal experience of living with a disability and advocating for your needs it can be used as a positive example.



One other participant said that the case studies were very useful as a training resource and another participant clearly understood what the differences are between advocacy and case management.

It would benefit clients in the future as it would give them an insight into how advocacy and empowerment are related to each other. A big thank you! to the Master of Ceremonies, Vanco Djoneski and the three other individual advocates who shared their expertise on the topic. My suggestion is that this should continue every year with a new batch of members being selected. Thanks.  
(Nidhi Shekaran, a member of MDAA)

## CIWDA HOUSING RIGHTS FORUM

City and Inner West Disability Advocacy, held a forum on Housing Rights on 7 December 2007. Two Tenant Advocates from Inner Sydney Tenants Advice and Rights Service spoke to 20 Consumers who all had different issues with their housing. The Tenant Advocates gave out information and tips on issues such as a client's right to accessibility, transfer of properties, repairs and maintenance, complaint process and neighbourhood disputes.

The Inner Sydney Tenants Advocates can be contacted on: Tel: (02) 9698 5975, TTY: (02) 96998037, 73 Pitt Street, Redfern NSW 2016

## CENTRELINK INFO SESSION AT MDAA-WOLLONGONG

Centrelink's Multicultural Service & the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association (MDAA) organised an information session for people with disability from non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB), their families and carers which covered the following:

- \* Appeal Process – how it can help you if you're not happy with Centrelink decisions
- \* Centrelink services for people from NESB
- \* Financial Information Service

The speaker was Peter Bestman from Centrelink Multicultural Service. The session was held in the Illawarra Multicultural Services office at 27 Atchison Street Wollongong on Friday, 29 February 2008.

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Come and join the International Women's Day celebration !!! Different activities are happening close to your place. Call your local women's organisation, community centre or call the NSW Network of Women With Disability on 9891 6400 for more info.



## MDAA CONSUMERS' FORUMS 2008

All consumers and members are invited to the following Consumer Forums free of charge. Light refreshments are offered and the venue is 40 Albion St, Harris Park, NSW. If you need support or have any question just give us a call on 9891-6400

### Tenancy (Housing Commission)

Date: 19 March 2008

For bookings please call Viji Dhayanathan (Individual Advocate)

### Health and Leisure

Date: 16 April 2008

For bookings please call George Ayoub (Individual Advocate)

### Immigration and Citizenship

Date: 21 May 2008

For bookings please call Gordana Kalanj (Individual Advocate)

## MDAA WELCOMES ADAMA AND ACE

Adama Kamara, originally from Sierra Leone, started working at MDAA in October 2007 as the Policy/Industry Development Worker. Previously Adama was working as a Counsellor/Project Officer at the NSW Service for the Treatment of Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS).

Part of her role here at MDAA is to develop and implement policies and projects in areas affecting people from NESB with disability and their families. Adama is also responsible for developing resources and providing support to the NSW disability services sector. Part of Adama's role is to support MDAA's Policy subcommittee. Adama looks forward to advocating for systemic change and is excited about working at MDAA.

Ace Boncato: I started work at MDAA in mid December of last year. Before that I was a member of the NSW Youth Advisory Council and the MDAA Committee while studying at uni. My main role at MDAA is to take on two projects: a research project on the issues and experiences of NESB carers in relation to social housing and the NESB Young Carers Project.

I recently facilitated a NESB Young Carers Consultation which involved 12 young people. This consultation was a great introduction to the NESB Young Carers Project and a great opportunity to get to know some young people in MDAA's community. While currently undertaking research, I will also be holding a consultation for NESB carers in social housing that is planned to take place in late March. "I am happy and excited to be on board and looking forward to getting to know, and working with you". Ace said.



## CONSULTATION WITH THE NEPALESE COMMUNITY

MDAA wants to work with the Nepalese community and on 29 March 2008 from 10am to 12am (Saturday) we are going to have our first consultation with Nepalese community workers as a part of our Community Links Project.

The Community Links Project aims to increase MDAA's links with communities from Africa, the Indian Subcontinent and Spanish speaking Latin America, to raise awareness within these communities about disability and the services available in NSW.

### Objectives:

- Ø To raise awareness and enhance knowledge about disability among communities from Africa, the Indian Subcontinent and Spanish speaking Latin America living in NSW.
- Ø To help reduce stigma about disability and disability related issues among those communities.
- Ø To work in partnership and consultation

with community workers, services and the communities.

- Ø To raise awareness about disability services and resources available to people from those communities.
- Ø To inform community members about their rights and how they can achieve them.
- Ø To connect those communities to MDAA advocacy services which can assist people to know their rights and to make informed decisions and choices about matters such as education, jobs, disability services, accommodation and immigration.

Therefore we would like to invite all Nepalese community workers to join us and tell our Community Links Officer how we can help your community.

For more information please call Gordana or Ather on 02 9891 6400.

## Accessible Arts Opens Visual Artists Studio for 2008

Accessible Arts (AA) in partnership with Pine Street Creative Arts Centre Sydney is delighted to announce that the Visual Artists Studio opportunity for artists with disability is open for 2008. After a successful pilot program the Sidney Myer foundation has agreed to fund the 2008 program. The program provides visual artists with a disability with an opportunity to expand their artistic discipline and technical skills through a series of eighteen workshops.

AA is now seeking interested individuals who wish to participate in the studio project in 2008. Applicants must complete the registration form and selection will be based upon samples of work submitted by the artist. The Studio Project Program: Painting and Drawing, Elective 1: Digital dimensions, Elective 2: Printmaking, Elective 3: Studio practice.

Where: Pine Street Creative Arts Centre  
When: 9:30am - 4:30pm. Who: Post school to adult education level.  
Dates: Friday 2 May to Friday 19 September



with a 2 week break. Cost: Free.  
Access: Venue and toilets are wheelchair and limited mobility accessible. Registration and work should be submitted by: Friday 28 March 2008. For information regarding registration contact Sancha Donald on 02 9251 6499 ext 8 or visit the website [aarts.net.au](http://aarts.net.au) and go to the 'Our Projects' page. For all media enquiries please contact Jacqui O'Reilly on 029251 6499 or [info@aarts.net.au](mailto:info@aarts.net.au).

## Religious and Significant Days

### MARCH

2	Meatfare (Judgement) Sunday	Orthodox Christian
6	Maha Shivaratri **	Hindu
8	International Women's Day	United Nations
10	Lent begins (Clean Monday)	Orthodox Christian
16	Palm/Passion Sunday**	Christian
	Orthodox Sunday	Orthodox Christian
20	Mawlid an Nabi *	Islam
21	Naw Ruz (New Year) *	Baha'i
	Norooz (The New Day)	Zoroastrian
	Good Friday	Christian
	Purim *	Jewish
	Magha Puja Day**	Buddhist
21	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	United Nations
	Harmony Day	Australia
26	Khordad Sal (Birth of the prophet Zarathushtra)	Zoroastrian

22	Holi**	Hindu
	Hola Maholla	Sikh
	Easter Saturday	Christian
23	Easter Sunday	Christian
24	Easter Monday	Christian
25	Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Christian

### APRIL

6	New Year**	Hindu
6-11	Ramayana**	Hindu
14	Baisakhi (Vaisakhi)	Sikh
	Ramanavami **	Hindu
19	Lazarus Saturday	Orthodox Christian
20	Palm Sunday	Orthodox Christian
20-23	Theravadan Buddhist New Year	Buddhist
20-26	Pesach (Passover) *	Jewish
21	Ridvan begins *	Baha'i
25	Holy Friday	Orthodox Christian
27	Easter/ Pascha	Orthodox Christian
29	Ninth Day of Ridvan *	Baha'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/2008.htm](http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/2008.htm)). Detailed explanations about each holy day can be found on MDAA's website on the Frequently Asked Questions page ([www.mdaa.org.au](http://www.mdaa.org.au))