



# Share with us

MDAA Newsletter

August 2008

## In this issue:

**MDAA Consumer Lobbying & Elections Forums  
City and Inner West (CIWDA) News  
September 2008 Local Elections**

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## Welcome Stephen Kerr & Tet Siu Khun to CIWDA

My name is Stephen Kerr and I work at the City and Inner West Disability Advocacy (Managed by MDAA) as an individual advocate. I am busy getting to know clients and developing links with services. I have worked in the disability arena in accommodation support services for over 15 years. I am passionate when it comes to social justice issues.



## Tet Siu Khun

Tet Siu Khun is my name and individual advocacy is my game. I work at the City and Inner West Disability Advocacy (CIWDA) and my main goal as an advocate is to develop and empower my clients with knowledge, skills and confidence. Previous to my role at CIWDA, I was a Team Leader for a respite service provider (Share Care Incorporated), running 4 programs across Liverpool to Bankstown. I am very passionate at what I do and have been involved with this industry for the past 5 years.



## NSW Local Council Elections

Did you know?

The New South Wales Local Council Elections will be held on Saturday 13 September 2008.

Complete an Electoral Enrolment Form. Forms are available from:

- any Australia Post office
- the NSWEC ([www.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au))
- The Australian Electoral Commission ([www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au))

Are you enrolled to vote? You can check if you are enrolled and your details are correct by calling the NSW Electoral Commission on phone 1300 135 736

Source: NSW Electoral Commission)

## MDAA ACTIVITIES HELD IN JULY-AUGUST

### July

1. Health & Leisure Forum done on 26 June: Health and travelling tips were given to MDAA consumers and members by Simon Darcy and Dr Seeta Durvasula, of the Centre for Developmental Disability Studies. Best accessible leisure spots were identified as well as how to get information to where to go when organising your next holidays or outings. Here is the link to this info:  
<http://www.ltl.com.au/>



### August

1. On Fifth August 2008, MDAA had the Lobbying Forum at Granville Youth & Community Centre. It was attended by 25 people. There were two workshops run by Shobhna Pandaram from the Office of Fair Trading

and Carolyn Campbell from the NSW Ombudsman Office. Both speakers were surprised and delighted by the number of questions and personal stories from the audience who was so keen to share. Useful tips were given to consumers about how and who to write complaint letters when there are issues involved in accessing services or buying goods. The participants gave their feedback to make sure the coming MDAA forums are as good if not better than this one.

2. We gathered again for another one called the Election Forum which was held on the 28 August and was well attended by consumers and Committee of Management of MDAA. Some of the Committee members did the presentation and had a role play on getting assistance when voting.

**Congratulations for a job well done everyone!**



## FEEDBACK FROM OUR CONSUMER FORUMS ON LOBBYING AND ELECTIONS

### The feed back included:

“ I like both sessions of the Lobbying Forum because they are informative and the resource speakers encouraged everyone to ask questions”

“ I learnt lots of information I didn't know before and this gives us extra knowledge in times of problems”

“ We know our rights and she explain how to build confidence in communicating”

“ Invite resource speakers from Fair Trading and NSW Ombudsman regularly because we forget easily and so we also know if there are changes”

“ I know more about Council's functions, operations and departments”

“ Happy to meet the Local Councillor”

“ This is my first time to attend your meeting and I am happy because people are friendly and sharing so I will come to your next meetings”



## UPCOMING MDAA FORUMS - SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER

1. Employment Forum, September 2008. For bookings call Vanco on (02) 9891-6400. Venue: 40 Albion St, Harris Park.
2. Visit to the NSW Parliament: 15 October 2008. Venue: NSW Parliament. For all bookings call Adama or Susan at MDAA on (02) 98916400
3. **MDAA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:** It's that time of year again when all of MDAA members, supporters and friends gather to celebrate MDAA achievements for the past year and also to elect new officers as there would be some of the Committee whose term is ending. **Date: 26 November 2008. Where: Granville Youth & Community Centre.**

## CASE STUDY

A young woman with mental health issue is in jail and is not happy with her solicitor who is funded by Legal Aid because he does not communicate with her and does not follow her instructions. She made contact with CIWDA and the advocate visited her in jail. Then the advocate contacted Legal Aid to raise her issues. As a result, she has been allocated by Legal Aid a new solicitor.

## OTHER NEWS AND INFO

### RED CROSS MONITORING SERVICE

Red Cross -Telecross is a service designed to ensure that the physical wellbeing of people living alone is monitored and, when necessary, follow-up is made. The service is delivered predominantly by volunteers who make a daily morning phone call to a client. While the service is primarily a wellbeing check, there is also the important social aspect to the call. The morning call gives the client an opportunity to have a social chat with another person who is interested in them. This service is offered at no cost to the client. Phone (02) 9229 4111  
Free Toll 1800 827 677

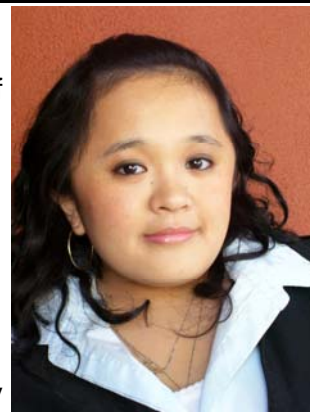
### FREE CARS FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

Australian search engine, Big Roo has announced that needy families and community groups nationwide, will be able to borrow small late-model vehicles, for up to 6 months absolutely free of charge to help them get back on their feet. The cars will be delivered to the families or groups with a full tank of fuel. In addition, Big Roo will meet all vehicle registration, insurance and maintenance costs.

Candidates must be at least 25 years of age; have a clean driving licence; be a responsible, careful and considerate driver; drive at least 400 kilometres a week; keep the vehicle in a clean and roadworthy condition; and be an Australian citizen or Permanent Resident. For more information visit Big Roo website: [www.bigroo.com/308.0.html](http://www.bigroo.com/308.0.html)

## ACE BONCATO, RECIPIENT OF GLOBAL FILIPINO YOUTH AWARDS

Congratulations to Ace Boncato, one of our staff members who got awarded by the Global Filipinos Australia (GFA) in its inaugural GLOBAL FILIPINO YOUTH AWARDS – CELEBRATING YOUTH – “RECOGNITION IN MOTION” for community service. The awarding was held on 14 July 2008, at the NSW Parliament Theatre, Macquarie Street, Sydney from 1-4pm. On behalf of Ace who was on holidays, Susan Laguna received her award. Photo below shows Susan with Hon John Aquilina.



## Religious and Significant Days

### SEPTEMBER

2	Ramadan begins *	Islam
3	Ganesh Chaturthi **	Hindu
8	Nativity of Virgin Mary	Christian
14	Holy Cross Day	Christian
28	Laylat el Qadr	Islam
30 - 1 Oct	Rosh Hashanah *	Jewish
30 - 8 Oct		Navaratri Hindu

### OCTOBER

2	Eid al-Fitr (Ramadan ends)	Islam
9	Yom Kippur*	Jewish
	Dasera **	Hindu
14-20	Sukkot*	Jewish
20	Birth of the B'ab	Baha'i
21	Shemini Atzeret *	Jewish
22	Simchat Torah *	Jewish
28	Diwali - Deepavali **	Hindu

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))

## CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR SOCIAL HOUSING

Shelter NSW Incorporated

### **National Affordable Housing Agreement: urge the federal government to increase social housing funding**

Dear members and subscribers,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a campaign aimed at increasing the funding for social housing.

The Australian Labor Party, when in opposition, was highly critical of the Howard government for having withdrawn funds from social housing. Now it has an opportunity to right that wrong. The federal and state governments are currently negotiating a National Affordable Housing Agreement to replace the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. You can download a brief that gives background to the new agreement here:  
<<http://www.shelternsw.org.au/docs/fly08nahafactsheet.pdf>> (pdf, 50 kb).

This is a critical opportunity to urge the federal government to commit to increased funding for social housing and new support for community housing.

We encourage you to write to your local federal member of parliament as soon as possible, and we have drafted a form letter which you can use or adapt to suit yourself:  
<<http://www.shelternsw.org.au/docs/fly08nahafederalimpletter-proforma.rtf>> (rtf, 3kb).

You can find the contact details for NSW federal MPs at the Commonwealth Parliament website: <<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/members/mi-state.asp>>.

To find what federal electorate you are in, you can search the Australian Electoral Commission website: <<http://apps.aec.gov.au/esearch/>>.

In order to sustain and grow our social housing system it is crucial that additional funds are allocated to it. In order to achieve this Cabinet must be convinced, so you may also wish to send letters to the following members of Cabinet: the Hon. Kevin Rudd, MP, Prime Minister; the Hon. Wayne Swan, MP, Treasurer; the Hon. Jenny Macklin, MP, Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; and the Hon. Lindsay Tanner, MP, Minister for Finance and Deregulation.

We would like to know how many letters have been sent, so please keep us informed by emailing Mary Perkins: <[mary@shelternsw.org.au](mailto:mary@shelternsw.org.au)>.

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## NEWS RELEASE

The Hon. Kristina Keneally MP

Member for Heffron Minister for Ageing Minister for Disability Services

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### **AFTER SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR PARENTS OF TEENAGED STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The Lemna Government will launch a **one million dollar pilot program** called *Teen Time – After School and Vacation Support for Working Parents*, to give parents of teenagers with an intellectual disability a boost in respite so they can pursue jobs and study.

NSW Minister for Disability Services, Kristina Keneally, said the pilot follows a Senate report on poverty and disadvantage in Australia, which found carers who remain in employment require flexible work practices, alternative care arrangements and financial assistance with the costs of caring.

“The 2004 ‘*A hand up not a hand out: Renewing the fight against poverty and financial hardship*’ report found **parents of kids with a disability are more likely to be financial disadvantaged**, including single parent carers who are particularly vulnerable,” Ms Keneally said.

“The two year, **\$928,000 pilot** of *Teen Time*, has been developed in direct response to the needs of carers of secondary students with an intellectual disability.

“The program, to be launched within the next two months, will be available to parents and carers of up to 81 teenagers with intellectual disabilities who need a helping hand so they have the time to **get a job, keep a job, or do some study to help them qualify for a job.**

“The trial is a practical way we can give these parents a hand and will also help reduce the need for longer term alternative placements for children and young people - because it will increase the capacity of a person to continue to be a primary carer.

“*Teen Time* will be based in schools already equipped for students with a disability because they provide a ready-made environment where students can **take part in meaningful leisure activities, pursue individual and group interests, or do their homework.**

“Initially the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) will carry out the trial in four locations – **Epping, Kellyville, Merrylands and Werrington**. It will cover three hours a day for 40 weeks of the year at each location, plus 10 hours a day for up to nine weeks of school holidays.”

Ms Keneally said the innovative *Teen Time* program will add to the Government’s extensive range of early intervention programs for children and young people with a disability including:

- The Building Foundations-Autism: Your Child Your Family program;
- The Early Childhood Intervention program; and
- The Early Childhood intervention Info Line.

“The Lemna Government recognises that carers, especially single parent carers, have additional needs. We will trial *Teen Time* to see if it improves support available to the parents who need it, and if the pilot shows promising results we will look at rolling it out at other locations,” Ms Keneally said.

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