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MDAA Consumer Forums

Community Voices

MDAA Members Get Out and About

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Monday -Friday
9.00am - 5.00pm

40 Albion Street,
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MDAA - TENANCY RIGHTS FORUM 20 May 2009 talked about rights and responsibilities of tenants renting either private or public housing. One consumer said: " I learnt that there is a service for people with housing complaints. Now, I clearly understand the difference between public housing, social housing and private rental commodation".



MDAA & NSW OMBUDSMAN FORUM 24 JUNE 2009 dealt with making complaints at MDAA and about other community services. The idea is to make people aware that it is OK to complain or give feedback to any service as this helps them to become better.

Susan from MDAA explained MDAA's Complaint Policy and some consumers did a role play on how to make a complaint. The staff at the NSW Ombudsman gave people tips on how to communicate effectively with services.



Community Voices (CV) and other MDAA Bits



The Cancer Council's Biggest Morning Tea raised over \$300
10.06.09



CV Training June 09



CV Robina at BCRG Training in Bankstown
16.06.09



MDAA Advocate, Viji and CV member, Nidhi in the information session in Parramatta June 09 with Indian Carers





CV George at Refugee Day in Fairfield on 18.06.09.



CV Rachel Lazarov and Robina Yasmin and MDAA Director Diana Qian during the DADHC Conference at Homebush Novotel on 28.05.09.

CV members Hannen, Pamela and Emmanuel minding MDAA's stall at the DADHC Conference.



Jamil Shibli's Self-Advocacy Story

In December 2006, I met Fouzia (my wife) who came to Australia as a guardian to her daughter who is studying here. Our personal relationship grew closer and we started living together in a de facto relationship in January 2007. My physical condition is affecting my daily life and Fouzia spontaneously became my support person and my soul mate. Our relationship gave me enormous happiness as I was living alone for many years after my previous marriage broke down since 1999. Fouzia was a widow since 2001 and like myself she was very lonely. Our marriage and household became strong and positive influence for both of us. As her visa was running out and not knowing what to do, Fouzia applied for a Protection Visa however it was rejected so we put in an application for a Spouse Visa application. Then we faced various complicated Migration regulations such that as Fouzia initially came as a visitor to Australia and there is a "no further stay" condition so she had to lodge the Spouse visa application offshore. So in late 2008, Fouzia had to go back to Bangladesh and I tried to lobby staff at DIAC to expedite the processing of her application. Through my reporting duties and voluntary work in the community, I met the **Prime Minister** in person and I lobbied him as well. There is no harm in trying so I thought. The isolation was very painful for both of us and we gathered written support letters from many individuals including the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association. The heart breaking circumstances was so overwhelming for us so that we could not bear the alienation so we had to meet and spend some together in a neutral country (**Thailand**) in December 2008. After this short reunion, we parted ways again, I headed for Australia and Fouzia went back to Dhaka. We continued to struggle and asked the support of advocates, politicians (my Federal member of Parliament, the Minister for DIAC and community groups who wrote numerous letters in support of our reunification in Australia. Finally, Fouzia was interviewed in Dhaka and was granted the Visa. At last after six long months of painful isolations, Fouzia came back to me on 15 April 2009 and instantly we both became very happy together again. DIAC has got some compassionate officers but there are some officers who never ever care about the pain of isolation between spouses. We cordially thank the MDAA advocate and other concerned individuals who came to help us so we can be re-united. **Thanks to all well Wishers.**



Changes to Carer Payment (care receiver under 16)

Are you looking after a child under 16 with severe disability or severe medical condition? If so, you may be interested to know about some changes to Carer Payment that take effect from 1 July 2009. Carer Payment provides income support to carers who, because of the demands of their caring role, are unable to support themselves through substantial paid work. Carer Payment is income and assets tested and paid at the same rate as other social security pensions.

The most important change is to the way Centrelink decides who receives the Carer Payment. The new assessment method that will be used from 1 July 2009 looks at the carer's total care load.

Other changes include:

- * recognising more situations when carers will receive the payment, such as caring for:
 - * one child with severe disability or severe medical condition
 - * two or more children with disability or medical condition
 - * an adult with disability and one or more children with disability or medical condition
- * the payment will be available to eligible carers who are looking after a person for a short period of time, that is more than three months, but less than six months
- * more sensitive and generous arrangements for carers of children with a terminal illness
- * removing the 63 day limit on hospitalisation of the care receiver
- * automatic Carer Allowance for carers of children who qualify for Carer Payment
- * a wider range of health professionals to

complete medical forms.

For information about rates, other available assistance or your potential eligibility under the new conditions, you can contact Centrelink from 1 July 2009.

Do you have feedback about these changes?

If so, you can email the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs at

carer.reforms@fahcsia.gov.au or write to:

FaHCSIA - Carer Payment Reforms

PO Box 7576 Canberra Business Centre.

ACT 2610

Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610

Feedback received will be generically

acknowledged. All feedback will be considered

as part of the ongoing review of this Carer

Payment reform initiative.

Parramatta Loop Bus Service

I use it as my main mode of transport to travel for my appointments with Jobmatch (employment service) and I use it to travel to work. It runs every 10 minutes on Monday to Friday and Saturday. It has good accessibility for people with disability and mothers with young children. It is also good for people with hearing impairments as it is computerized. Bus stops can be read off a screen and it is good for people with visual impairments because the computer speaks the stops as well. Bus drivers are very helpful and understanding of passenger's needs. It goes from Darcy Street, outside Parramatta station to North Parramatta. By Nidhi Shekaran

Note: The contact phone is 9806 5050.

Free for everybody-No ticket required.

Runs 7am-6pm Monday-Friday and Saturday 8am-4pm

Religious and Significant Days

JULY

7	Asalha Puja Day**	Buddhist
7	Guru Purnima**	Hindu
9	Martyrdom of the Bab *	Baha'i
13-16	Ulambana / Obon **	Buddhist/Shinto
19	Lailat al-Miraj	Islam
19	New Year	Mandean
24	Pioneer Day	Mormon Christian
30	Tisha B'av *	Jewish

AUGUST

5	Raksha Bandhan **	Hindu
5	Lailat al Bara'ah **	Islam
6	Transfiguration of Christ	Orthodox Christian
14	Krishna Janmashtami **	Hindu
15	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Catholic Christian
	Dormition of the Theotokos	Orthodox Christian
22	Ramadan begins *	Islam
23	Ganesh Chaturthi **	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/2009.htm).

More details about each day can be found at www.mdaa.org.au on the Frequently Asked Questions page.

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Hannen Gets Out and About

In Australia

Sir Roden Cutler Roll Out on 5 May 2009:

I was invited to go to a wheelchair charity event in the city. The purpose of the event is to improve wheelchair awareness and raise money. There was a lot of different politicians and the Minister for Disability in NSW was there. I think he is a great person. I had someone give me a push the whole day. We all had lunch with each other. I had lot of fun and got to meet lots of people.

Holiday in the South Coast:

My family and I went on holidays to the South Coast and stayed at a house for 2 weeks. We had a really great time. We went to the beach every day because the beach was only a 5 minute walk away. What was different to Sydney is that you can leave your door open and there were not many people who lived there. It was really nice to get away from Sydney. We also went to the shops and the shops are different to Sydney's because when you go to buy something the people are really friendly and they like to help a lot.

Holiday to Lebanon (April 2009):

My sister-in-law and I went overseas for a holiday. We went to Lebanon for 6 weeks. I stayed with my sister-in-law and other members of my extended family. We went all over Lebanon. The wether was a bit hot. We all went for a horse ride and a donkey ride and had lunch together. On one of the days we went to a place that had lots of flowers it was a nice place. I had lots of fun. I did not want to come back. We had a great time on the airplane. I had lots of help on the airplane. We went shopping and to the beach. I went on a camel ride. I had a really great time with family and friends. I met lots of people that were members of my family that I did not know. I just had a great time and if any one would come with me I would go again.

Rachel Lazarov Takes a Ride

This is a picture of me on a Honda Goldwing motorcycle. It was fun. The trip was to Warragamba Dam and was arranged through the Amputee Association.



Insert

Carer Assist Sydney South West AHS Region (Belmore, Campbelltown, Moss Vale)

Who are Carers? A carer is someone who looks after a friend or relative with a disability, mental illness, chronic illness or who is frail aged. A carer can come from any walk of life, cultural background and age group. A carer may have to care for someone 24 hours a day, seven days a week which is often emotionally, physically and financially draining. Carers' needs are often neglected resulting in added stress hindering their ability to cope.

Why Carer Assist?

We can help families and friends by:

- Helping to find diagnostic and treatment services.
- Providing information and support to cope with the grief of diagnosis.
- Providing assistance in building support systems.
- Providing information and education on how to live with someone who has a mental illness.
- Providing information and education on how to set boundaries.
- Providing information and education on caring for yourself.
- Providing or sourcing extra support in times of crisis.
- Assisting with navigation of the mental health system.
- Assisting with advocacy when their requirements or those of the person they are caring for are not met or are not being appropriately met.

The Carer Advocates: Carer Advocates work part-time and provide people with a mental illness with:

- **Information:** The provision of information about mental illness, services and the mental health system is essential to ensure that carers' needs are met and to assist them to better care for their friend or relative.
- **Education:** An important aspect of the Carer Advocate's role is to provide education to empower carers so that their needs can be met. This is on a one to one basis or through our educational programs such as "Well Ways" -helping families and friends find better ways.
- **Advocacy:** Where appropriate, they advocate on behalf of carers to ensure that the carers have access to information and services that they require.
- **Support:** The Carer Advocates provide emotional support both over the telephone and face to face.

Carer Advocates are located at the offices listed below:

Belmore Area Office: Ph 9750 9744, Email: infossw@carerassist.org.au

Campbelltown Office: Ph 4620 5255,

Moss Vale Office: Ph 4868 2755

Some facts on Mental Illness:

- Mental Illness affects one in every five Australians
- 62% of people with mental illness receive no assistance at all or depend on informal support from carers and families
- Australia has 2.5 million carers, 750,000 of whom live in NSW

Respite Program for Carers of People with Mental Illness

North Sydney Council and Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre (KNC) are implementing a new respite program for carers of people with mental illness, thanks to almost a million dollars in grant money from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). The three-year project, called the Wellness Respite Attainment Program, or Kirribilli WRAP, will cost \$922,500, paid for by FaHCSIA. The grant will fund holidays, outings, therapeutic support, exercise, and cultural and educational courses for carers of people with mental illness, as well as a new Wellness Centre at Bradfield Park Community Centre, with two full time staff: one coordinator and one case worker.

Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre Co-operative Ltd, 16-18 Fitzroy St, Kirribilli NSW 2061

Phone 9922 4428, Fax 9956 7562, Email info@knksydney.org

Website <http://www.knksydney.org>