



# Consumer Action ...



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## Consumer Forum ...

IN THE past few months the Consumer Forum has been attended by 6, 9 and 6 people respectively. The meetings have changed format, becoming more formal and including reports from MHACA service areas and a bi-monthly CAMHS Executive meeting update. In April, we were privileged to have a presentation from both Claudia Manu-Preston and Trish Van Dijk who talked about MHACA. Trish also gave her personal touch by telling us about her life and how she came to have an interest in MHACA, and also spoke on behalf of her position as Chairperson of the committee, telling us that "the board want to support consumers as much as they can and do things properly". In June, we were relieved (after the absence of a D2DL Coordinator) to finally meet Missa, who told us of her interest in doing silk-screening, theatre, dance, yoga and making beanies. We also had a presentation on colour-therapy by Lynne and are looking forward to this coming on the calendar.



Brian from LPP with Kathryn Albert, Transitional Housing Coordinator & Lance Box, Financial Counsellor at Anglicare talking Money Matters

The Consumer Action Group is held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month @ 12-2pm

The Consumer Forum is held on the 4th Tuesday of each month @ 6.00-8.00pm

Please come along - Everyone is Welcome!

## Consumer Action Group (CAG) ...

The CAG meetings are a place where action takes place from ideas that have been put forward at the Consumer Forum. In the last three months the CAG group has been attended by 4, 7 and 4 people respectively. We have worked on a number of things, including an all important 'Out of Hours Help Card' which has numbers from ten different help lines. This card developed from a concern that people with a lived experience of mental illness have been having, on what to do in times of need during out of hours time. Thank you to Lynne and to Em who both assisted in getting the card printed. If anyone wants one please see a consumer representative.

We have also determined two family friendly activities which we are pursuing and have broadened our horizons by inviting the NT Carers to come along to 10-pin bowling competitions and a mock-tail disco night.

## D2DL Activities ...

A monthly 2-hour workshop **Money Matters** has been run by an informative fellow with a clue on budgeting; it has been a valuable addition to the calendar. **Get fit at the "Y"** with instructors from the YMCA gym has also been on the calendar and a high level of interest has been shown. **Bush-walking** was on the calendar for July and consumers had a trip out to Simpsons Gap; the rock faces are amazing. **Mandala Drawing** with Lynne Kennedy has been as popular as ever with excellent feedback from those people that that have given it a go. **Computing for Beginners** has begun at MHACA, a way in which people can build confidence in having curiosity for the computer and learning to use the internet and emails. **Singing for Recording** is in its final stage of making the CD cover; keep a watch on the calendar for the CD launch which will be in a few months; there are three original songs on the album.

**The Drop-In Centre** is continuing to be popular for the cups of coffee and chats, computers are a favourite past-time, the new Wii games have become very popular, and lounging in the lounge area is an ideal option for those of us that want to have a listen to a CD, watch TV or simply relax.

## Darwin Holiday

The consumer trip to Darwin was a great success and I would like to say a big thank you to the staff involved for all of their hard work in organising this. Also a big thank you to the consumer sub-committee that initiated the organising process with research and ideas... well done! See page 42 for full report.

Left: Alan, Robert & Brian chilling out in Litchfield National Park



## Helen Glover Workshop ...

About eight people attended Helen Glover's workshop in late May. Helen facilitated an interactive discussion of where we are at on our journey of recovery, and also explained the different formalities and ways of participating in peer support.

Helen talked about the importance of seeking out people who will give us informed choices (not tell us what to do) and help empower us with knowledge of what we are doing to and with our mind and bodies. She said that the recovery journey is the hardest work that a person with a lived experience will ever do.

Another important point Helen raised was that in talking about ourselves as having a difference helps to perpetuate a difference; and it's wise to choose who we discuss our mental health issues with. Also, that ultimately we are each responsible for our own wellbeing.

We then watched two films which showed two people's recovery journeys through their own eyes. **One person said it was others having high expectations of him that helped change his life from being a recluse to teaching at universities.** The other said it was having goals with flexibility and the support from her partner which made recovery possible.

It was a very interesting and informative morning and we thank MHACA for providing the opportunity to work with Helen who has a great grasp on the recovery journey.

*Helen has provided our library with three articles on peer support if anyone would like to read about American versions of peer support services.*



## Warren.H. Williams in Concert at Araluen

Saturday, 30 May 2009

Judith, Paul & Rebecca  
at the show

'Warren responded to audience participation. At first he was a bit nervous playing to his home town and he had written some songs specifically for the show. I really had a good time' writes Gwyn, 'I thought Warren was really fun to watch and listen to and I like that. He played the piano and guitar while he was singing.' Paul loved the stage set up 'with trees and lights coming from tins that looked like fire. Warren also had a large screen on stage with photos of the outback and his family that went very well with his music.'

Warren surprised people by playing the grand piano as well as his guitar. There were five other people in the band including two cousins who played a variety of instruments. Warren sang a song that won him a Golden Guitar Award at Tamworth and the concert was filmed by the ABC.

Gwyn liked the fact that a local artist has won recognition for his efforts and feels proud of him. Paul said 'I found him to be a down to earth person who loves his country and is very funny. Both agreed it was a very good night out for staff and consumers.'

*Gwyn & Paul*



## GROW Peer Support ...

GROW continues to have a small number of regular participants who have formed a solid group. GROW staff also continue to visit the hospital ward and talk about MHACA and GROW. For people that don't know, GROW is a self-help group that follows a 12-step program of recovery where we learn about other people's lived experiences and how the GROW method has helped them. It is a safe place of listening and sharing (if you want). There are a lot of benefits of attending GROW meetings which offer over 50 years of experience of mental health recovery using the GROW method.

## Araluen Activities ...

Attending performances by Warren Williams and the Kransky Sisters, viewing the *Samson and Delilah* and taking part in the Beanie Festival has all been on the social agenda and has been greatly enjoyed by those who went.

## Other Activities & Events

A congratulatory thank you to Reclink for their programs Playing Guitar and Urban Encounters which have both received rave reviews. As do all the football matches! The Social Inclusion for People with a Mental Illness forum (May), Walking Through Grief forum (June) and Mental Health First Aid courses (monthly) have also been attended by consumers.

## On Staff Leaving ...

The smiling faces and cheery attitudes of Emily, Joanne, Sean and Rita will be missed. What else is there to say except thank you from all the consumers for your open-minded approaches and for being such friendly people. Friendliness really counts and genuine concern for others. Thanks guys.

*Gwynnyth Cassiopeia~Roennfeldt,  
MHACA Consumer Representative*

Left: Emma & Rudi enjoying the action of our new Wii games in the Drop-In Centre



Above: Danielle and Glenis visiting the Women's Hall of Fame in July



Above: Glenis admiring pioneering history at the Women's Hall of Fame

Below: Padma and other women painting a group story at an "Urban Encounters" session at the Salvation Army



Left: Gwyn enjoying some painting in the sunshine



Above: Leo & Padma at "Urban Encounters"



Above: John & Joylene appreciating some daffodils in support of Daffodil Day this year on 28 August



Below: Alan getting practice on our new Wii

Below: Christine and Danielle getting into the swing of things on our new Wii



Above: John strumming a tune in the Drop-In Centre