



Mallacoota District Health and Support Service Inc.

Community Newsletter

No: 1 September 2006

The Mallacoota District Health and Support Service (MDHSS) provides a diverse range of programs that are designed to meet the needs of individuals and groups within the targeted population of Mallacoota, Gipsy Point, Genoa and district.

MDHSS is an incorporated body as defined in the Australian Incorporations Act 1981. Since 1986, MDHSS has been administered from Bairnsdale Regional Health Service (BRHS) when an order of the

Governor in Council appointed the CEO BRHS as administrator. At a public meeting in 2001, the Rules and Statement of Purpose for the service were endorsed by the community.

The appointment of the Administrator was revoked in December 2003, and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of BRHS is ex-officio MDHSS and oversees the Manager of MDHSS. In 2004, a Community Reference Group was elected consisting of nine people.

Our Mission

To work in partnership with the community to provide efficient and effective health care services

Mallacoota District Health and Support Service offers a range of services to all members of the community. Some services offered at MDHSS incur no charge: for example, family counselling, maternal and child health, community house, flexible care packages, supported accommodation assistance program and Centrelink. In the case of financial hardship, fees for MDHSS services are based on ability to pay as per MDHSS Policy and Department of Human Services Policy.

MDHSS is funded for the following programs by several government departments:

<p>Department of Human Services (DHS) Small Rural Health Service: Home and Community Care (HACC) Allied Health (Podiatry/Physiotherapy)* Community Nursing **</p> <p>Home Care Services Home care Delivered Meals ** Personal Care Property Maintenance Respite Care *** Planned Activity Group ** System Development and Resourcing Volunteer Coordination (Transport)</p> <p>Acute Care Post Acute Care Palliative Care</p> <p>Disability Services Flexible Support Packages</p> <p>Child Protection and Family Services Early Years Services Occasional Child Care Service ACFE Child Care Services</p> <p>Housing Assistance Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Transitional Housing Assistance (Community Housing Limited)</p> <p>Health Promotion Pap Screen Victoria (Cancer Council) Health Promotion Training</p>	<p>Australian Department of Health & Ageing Community Aged Care Packages Rural Health Services Branch (Drummer Program) Family Counseling Project Coordination Youth Services National Respite for Carers Program Multi Purpose Centre Occupational Therapist Physiotherapy * Podiatry * Dietician Speech therapist Continence Rural Allied Fly-in Services Administration</p> <p>Australian Government: Centrelink Agency Centrelink Services</p> <p>Department of Victorian Communities Neighbourhood House (Community House) Youth Participation and Access Program</p> <p>Victorian Department of Education Adult Community and Further Education</p>	<p>Victorian Department of Infrastructure My Connected Community Public Internet Access Program</p> <p>Australian Department of Family & Community Services Communities for Children Emergency Relief Program</p> <p>Australian Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Community Nursing Veterans' Homefront Veterans' Home Care</p> <p>MDHSS Self-funded Programs Independent Living Units – five Telecentre Men's Shed</p> <p>Bairnsdale Regional Health Service Visiting Specialists Stoma / Continence Nurses Diabetes Educator</p> <p>Orbost Regional Health Service Maternal and Child Health Nurse</p> <p>Note: * HACC and MPC funded ** HACC and DVA funded *** HACC and Dept of Health & Ageing funded</p>
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Programs are funded variously from one-off programs, such as Toddler Gym, one-year programs renewed annually, such as Emergency Relief Funding, ongoing programs, such as Centrelink, and three year programs, such as community nursing, respite care, family counseling, youth services. Also, MDHSS seeks funding for initiatives identified as being specific to the community. Recent programs successfully developed and funded are as follows: 24 hour in home respite care, 'Coota Connections' Life skills mentoring program, and the Men's Shed.

Recent Initiatives

MDHSS Men's Shed

The MDHSS Men's Shed was established in 2004 through a grant from the Rural Health Strategies Branch, Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. The Men's Shed is both a community-building project and a project that focuses on the health and well being of men in the community. The project is aimed at men of all ages and provides a centralised meeting space where men have an opportunity to socialise with other men, engage in structured activities, share and acquire skills and knowledge, and gain access to relevant services and information available to them within the community.

Every Wednesday night a Trading Table group is conducted in the Men's Shed. This group makes items that can be sold to raise money to purchase materials and equipment to be used for ongoing projects, as well as making repairs to community-based toys and equipment. The Men's Shed has seen an expansion of the range of equipment on offer to those participating in woodworking and building projects in the shed, from ongoing community donations.

The Men's Shed is a valuable asset, utilised by a broad section of the community.

Enquiries regarding the MDHSS Men's Shed can be made at Reception on 51 580243.

National Respite for Carers Program (NRCP)

MDHSS provides 24-hour respite for carers in their own homes. This program funded by the Department of Health and Ageing commenced in 2006. The respite program meets a need identified by Clearview Consultants in the MDHSS Five-Year Strategic Plan. The needs of carers of people with dementia, carers of the aged and carers of people with disabilities in the Mallee and district community, can be met by MDHSS, without the person being cared for having to leave the community. The aim of the program is to contribute to the support and maintenance of caring relationships between carers and their dependent family members or friends. NRCP facilitates access by carers to information, respite and other support, or assistance appropriate to their individual needs and

circumstances and those of the people for whom they care. Referrals can be made to the Home Care Coordinator, Ms. Jenny Griffiths, on 51580633.

Youth Participation and Access Program

In 2005, MDHSS was funded by the Department of Victorian Communities to establish a program to assist young people in the transition from school to work and or further education. This program called '*Coota Connections*' involves the provision of a lifeskills /mentoring program for young people in the community, between the ages of 12 – 25. Recently, seven community members were appointed as mentors and undertook accredited training in mentoring. The mentors will commence working with young people in the near future.

Information regarding the '*Coota Connections*' program may be obtained from the Community Development Worker, Mr. Philip Counsel, on 51580243.

Key Ongoing Programs

Home Care Services

MDHSS offers Home and Community Care (HACC) services, including community nursing and home care which involves, personal care, property maintenance and delivered meals. The HACC program is funded by the Department of Human Services, Small Rural Health Services program.

As well, the HACC Program offers allied health services (podiatry/physiotherapy). The podiatrist visits Mallee fortnightly on Wednesdays and the Physiotherapist consults two days a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Other HACC programs include the Planned Activity Group (PAG) and Volunteer Transport Program. The PAG program provides centre-based social activities and out-of-town outings. The Volunteer Transport Program provides a valuable service to eligible

residents of Mallee and District enabling MDHSS to transport community members to specialist medical appointments in Bairnsdale, Canberra, Bega, Eden, Merimbula and Orbost.

Centrelink

The Centrelink Agency provides a service to customers in rural, regional and remote Australia, who are eligible to access benefits under the Department of Human Services. The Centrelink service is critical in a remote area such as Mallee.

Centrelink personnel are as follows:

Neighbourhood House Coordinator, Ms Susie Vatcher, on 51580603.

Enquiries: Ms. Jan Millicer, Ms Julie Scott and Mr. John Hillyer, on 51580243

Adult Community & Further Education

The Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) classes provide a wide variety of skills development opportunities for the members of the community. A total of 1008 student contact hours were undertaken in 2004/2005. At times, childcare is provided for clients attending ACFE classes.

Programs have been provided in Computer Technology, Personal Development, Fine Arts, and Literacy and Numeracy. In August 2005, a new workshop on building a wood-fired oven was run very successfully, engaging many people, particularly men who had not participated in the ACFE program before. Over the course of a weekend, participants completed two wood-fired ovens, one of which is permanently located at the Men's Shed. Also, this program provided new social connections and introduced participants to the Men's Shed. It is anticipated that this wood fired oven program will be offered again in 2006.

For more information on ACFE programs contact Neighbourhood House Coordinator, Ms Susie Vatcher, on 51580603.

Specialised Aged Care Services

MDHSS is funded to provide 10 Community Aged Care Packages (CACP). The Community Aged Care Package Program assists people living in the community who have been assessed by the Aged Care Assessment Service (ACAS) as eligible to receive low-level hostel care in the home. Clients receiving a CACP have complex care needs over and above the mainstream Home and Community Care (HACC) Program Services.

Services available to CACP recipients include: Case-management / 24-hour emergency on-call contact person / Home care services / home help, personal care, property maintenance, respite care, delivered meals / Allied health services / Socialisation and transport services. Presently, MDHSS has two vacancies in the CACP Program.

Enquiries may be made by contacting the Home Care Coordinator, Ms. Jenny Griffiths, on 51580633.

Disability Services (Flexible Support Packages)

MDHSS manages five "Making A Difference" program packages. All of these packages are well utilised by clients in the community, and are a valuable support for people with a permanent disability.

The packages are proactive and enable MDHSS to provide excursions, which promote social interaction, the development of life skills and provide an opportunity for experiences outside of Mallacoota.

Several activities for eligible people were developed as follows:

- Trip to Bega Country Show
- Day trip to Magic Mountain
- Viewing of "Madagascar the Movie" in Merimbula
- Activities at Top Fun in Merimbula
- Yellow Pinch Wildlife Day Trip
- Visit to Merimbula Aquarium
- Ten Pin Bowling in Merimbula

For more information regarding the 'Making a Difference' program packages contact the Coordinator, Zoe Thorpe, on 51580243.

Youth Services (Drummer Program)

A youth services program designed to meet the needs of young people in the community, funded by the Department of Health and Ageing, was established in 2003. A full-time youth worker, Mr. Steve Baxter, was appointed to conduct the Drummer Program. Several programs for young people in Mallacoota were developed as follows:

- Skate competition - organised a skate competition and social activities for local young people
- Health Expo - contributed to the Health Expo events staged by the Mallacoota P-12 College
- Youth group - 10-12 young people regularly attend weekly activities in the Men's Shed. Since the opening of the shed in November 2004, 173 young people have attended activities in the shed and 26 sessions of Youth Group have been conducted
- January Holiday Activities - organised Beach Volleyball as well as Pool and Table Tennis at the Men's Shed
- Life Skills Training - in conjunction with the P-12 College, conducted weekly life-skills training for young people in the Men's Shed
- Youth CAAB Event - trip to accompany local young people to attend Youth CAAB event.

For more information regarding the Youth Services 'Drummer Program' contact the Youth Worker, Mr. Steve Baxter, on 51580243.

Visiting Specialists

A regular program offering the services of visiting specialists is provided at MDHSS as follows: Audiologist, Breast Screen, Continence Nurse, Diabetes Nurse, Dietitian, Maternal Child Health Nurse, Pap Screen, Podiatrist, Psychiatrist, Speech Therapist, Stoma Nurse, Thrifty Specs.

These visiting specialists come from Bairnsdale Regional Health Service, Orbost Regional Health Service, East Gippsland Division of General Practice, Latrobe Hospital, as well as specialists in private practice in Merimbula and Eden, and the Breast Screen bus from Melbourne. The regularity of visits ranges from fortnightly, monthly to quarterly.

Enquiries may be made by contacting MDHSS Reception on 51 580243.

Future Projects

Children's Hub

MDHSS undertook a review of Occasional Child Care which revealed high levels of satisfaction with the current service, as well as an unmet demand for full day care. Furthermore, services for children aged 0 to 6

will be reviewed over the next twelve months, including the feasibility of establishing a Children's Hub.

A Children's Hub could provide care and developmentally appropriate programs for children from birth to the end of their primary school years. These services could be designed to meet the needs of children and families, including kindergarten, long-day care, family-day care, occasional-care and outside-school-hours care, as well as articulating programs with primary school programs.

In Victoria, the State Government is responsible for regulating kindergartens, centre-based long-day care and occasional-care services. The Victorian government provides funding for the provision of kindergarten programs for all eligible children in the year prior to school entry, and the Australian Government has responsibility for the national child care policy. The Australian Government funds long-day care childcare places, and provides subsidies for family day care schemes and outside-school-hours care in the form of Child Care Benefit.

At present, MDHSS is funded to provide Occasional Child Care for five hours per week and the demand far exceeds the hours available.

MDHSS is not funded for long-day care, and offering of occasional child-care, is limited by the lack of facilities. It is hoped that the development of a Children's Hub would meet the needs, more effectively, for care requirements for young children.

Dental Services for Mallacoota and district

MDHSS is in the process of gathering data for the preparation of a submission for the establishment of a dental chair at MDHSS. This dental service will be offered on a part-time basis, delivered by visiting dentists. The service will be available for both public and private patients.

Previous dental services in Mallacoota operated from the Mallacoota Medical Centre. This service was well supported by the community and the need to re-establish this service was identified by Clearview Consultants in preparing the MDHSS Five Year Strategic Plan.

Information to support this submission is being gathered, and a critical part of this process is a survey of the community to identify need. For this reason, it is important that you complete the survey questions on the covering letter attached to this newsletter and return the survey in the stamp-addressed envelope provided.

Names are requested as part of the authentication process required by government departments when providing evidence in support of a submission for funding.

Names provided will be kept strictly confidential to MDHSS senior administrative staff, and information will be reported in numerical format only.

Neighbourhood House Extensions

The MDHSS Community House (Neighbourhood House) has been operating for eight years supporting and building community strength, offering adult education, childcare, health promotion, recreation, and connecting people within the wider community.

The 'Strengthening Victorian Communities' Program, run by the Department of Victorian Communities, offers funding for Modernising Neighbourhood House programs. MDHSS was successful in a submission in the area of ICT and Redevelopment for funding to modernise the MDHSS Community House.

An amount of \$67500.00 has been allocated to MDHSS, together with a \$25,000.00 contribution from MDHSS, to carry out this project.

It is anticipated that the project will commence in October this year and be completed in the early half of 2007. The project involves the extension and refurbishment of the existing building in order to provide easy access to people of all abilities, to improve public internet access, to ensure privacy and confidentiality for clients who access the Centrelink services, and to provide a safer work environment for staff and volunteers.

MDHSS Community Reference Group:

President: Dr Michael Drake, **Vice President:** Ms Greta Jessup
Members: Ms Lynne Casement, Senior Constable Stuart Johnston, Ms Annette Peisley, Mr John Roy, Dr Jenny Schlager, Mr Gordon Symons, Mr David Tassicker
Ex-Officio: Mr Gary Gray (CEO BRHS), Ms Celia Wallace (Manager MDHSS)