



# *Mallacoota District Health and Support Service Inc.*

## *Community Newsletter - No: 2 January 2007*

The Mallacoota District Health and Support Service 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.

Mallacoota District Health and Support Service offer 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.

### *Regular Activities at MDHSS*

#### **Monday**

9am – 10am	Tai Chi for Beginners
9 am – 11.30 am	Occasional Child Care
9 am - 1 pm	Men's Shed open
9.30 am – 2.30 pm	PAG swimming bus to Eden
10 am - 11 am	Gentle Exercises
11.15 – 11.45 am	Arthritis Exercises
12 noon	PAG Lunch
2 pm - 4 pm	Bridge Club

#### **Tuesday**

9 am – 10 am	'MDHSS Healthy Living' program, on 3MGB radio
9 am – 1 pm	Men's Shed open
10 am – 11.30 am	Playgroup at Miva Hall
10 am – 5 pm	Physiotherapy
5.30 pm – 6.30 pm	Weekly Support Group Therapy
5.30 pm onwards	Trading Table in Men's Shed

#### **Wednesday**

9 am - 1 pm	Men's Shed open
10 am	PAG Walking group

#### **Thursday**

9 am - 1 pm	Men's Shed open
9.30 am	Local Shopping / Library Bus Departs MDHSS at 10 am.
10 am – 5 pm	Physiotherapy
11 am - 11.45 am	Armchair Aerobics
12 noon	PAG lunch
3.30 pm - 6.30 pm	Youth Group (Men's Shed)
5.15 pm – 6.15 pm	Yoga Support Group

#### **Friday**

8 am - 4.30 pm	PAG bus to Merimbula F/N
9 am – 11.30 am	Occasional Child Care
9 am - 1 pm	Men's Shed open
1 pm – 3 pm	Bridge Club (PAG)

#### **Visiting Health Services**

	<b>When</b>
Audiologist	Monthly
Breast Screen Bus	Bi Annually
Continence Nurse	Monthly
Dietitian	Monthly
Maternal & Child Health Nurse	Fortnightly
Occupational Therapist	As required
PapScreen	Annually
Podiatrist	Fortnightly
Psychiatrist	Monthly
Speech Therapist	Monthly
Stoma Nurse	Quarterly
Thrifty Specs	Quarterly

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## *Current Issues*

### **Research activities**

Effective submission writing relies on up-to-date local information. Over the past year, MDHSS has engaged in a research and mapping process designed to develop a reliable community data base. The first issue of the MDHSS Newsletter in September 2006 used the data base as a trial run and enabled some corrections to the database. The MDHSS Newsletter has been established so that MDHSS can communicate with all residents in the district. The Newsletter and the community database provided the vehicle for surveying the community regarding support for a proposed Dental Hub. Results have been analysed and a report prepared and forwarded to various funding sources. The MDHSS Newsletter will be used in the future to gather much needed data to develop a local community profile.

Other research activities undertaken included a survey of parents regarding the needs of young people for youth services, as well as a survey of young people who have made the move from Mallacoota to a larger town / city to take up study or employment. Survey results provided a valuable guide for the Youth Participation and Access Program and also showed that the support systems in Mallacoota are highly valued by young people, particularly the support given by parents.

In consultation with Bairnsdale Regional Health Service Speech Pathology Unit, MDHSS designed and administered a survey of parents in order to evaluate the current services provided by MDHSS for children requiring speech therapy. As a result of this survey, MDHSS in partnership with BRHS and the Mallacoota P12 College has developed a program to bring two speech therapists to Mallacoota on a monthly basis, as well as providing regular support for parents through the MDHSS nursing team.

### **MDHSS Annual General Meeting**

Since the last newsletter MDHSS held the Annual General Meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2006 at which the Annual Report and Financial Statement was presented. The Manager of MDHSS gave a presentation to the enthusiastic attendees outlining organisation plans for 2006 – 2007, in particular, the Children's Hub and the Dental Service. After the presentation a lively interactive session took place which indicated the interest from members of the community in future developments, as well as reinforcing the need for a newsletter to communicate more effectively with the wider community.

### **MDHSS Community Reference Group (CRG)**

The nine members of the CRG are elected by members of the MDHSS, and three CRG members stand down each year. This year two resignations were received as well as having a vacancy, which occurred during 2005. As only three nominations from members were received for the three vacancies, an election was not required.

The following three people will join the CRG for a period of two years (2007 – 2008); Ms Annette Peisley (who served as a co-opted member during 2006), Ms. Sue Williamson and Ms. Prue Wootton. MDHSS congratulates the new members and welcomes them to the CRG. MDHSS would like to express strong appreciation for the valuable support from Dr. John Roy who served on the CRG since its establishment in 2001. MDHSS would also like to thank Mr. David Tassicker for his contribution to the CRG.

### **Dental Services Progress Report**

The consultants who prepared the MDHSS Strategic Plan 2006 – 2009 identified dental health as a priority area of need (Clearview Consultants Report p26). During 2006, MDHSS conducted a survey of all households in the Mallacoota and District community in order to gather data regarding the need for dental services, including anticipated use by residents. The survey was administered to 614 households. Responses were received from 316 households, representing a total of 610 residents. Results are shown in Table 1 and Table 2 indicating overwhelming support from the community for a dental service in Mallacoota.

## Current Issues contd..

**Table 1: Would use a dental service (households)**

	Yes	No	Not sure	Total
No.	294	17	5	316
%	93.0	5.4	1.6	100

**Table 2: Type of patient: public / private (households)**

Public	Private	Total
195	128	323
60.4%	39.6%	100%

If funding becomes available the following process will be followed: planning and consultation; establishing and refurbishing a dedicated area for dental service; purchase and installation of equipment; organisation of prospective dentists; publicity of dental services available. The support received from the community in providing the information was most valuable. MDHSS will keep the community informed of progress.

### Bush Fire Preparation Planning

Victoria is in the middle of a very difficult fire season and areas like Mallacoota have been encouraged to be prepared in the event of a bush fire. The Mallacoota emergency groups, (CFA, Police and SES) as well as organisations such as MDHSS, the Medical Practice and the Mallacoota P12 College have prepared fire plans and emergency procedures. Fire preparation information has been provided to households through radio, television, news papers, including the Mallacoota Mouth, notices on community notice boards and in the windows of businesses in Mallacoota and district, and on Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2007 a free bushfire survival meeting was held, at the Mud Brick Hall in Mallacoota, conducted by Mr. Rod Lewis the local fire brigade captain.

MDHSS would like to add their support, through our newsletter to the households in Mallacoota, to inform members of the community the importance of being properly prepared for the weeks (or months) ahead. If you need assistance to formulate your fire plans, you can contact the Mallacoota CFA or the Mallacoota Police as follows; Mr. Rod Lewis mobile 0419 419 692 or Sergeant Andrew Scott on 51580280 or the Victorian Bushfire Information Line 1800 240 667 (TTY for the deaf – 1800 555 677, then ask for 1800 240 667). If you require any further information you are invited to contact MDHSS on 51580243.

## On Going Programs

### National Respite for Carers Program (NRCP)

The aim of the respite program is to contribute to the support and maintenance of caring relationships between carers and their dependant family members or friends. MDHSS provides 24-hour respite for carers in their own homes or at a local community based setting. The needs of carers for people with dementia, carers of the aged and carers of people with disabilities may be met through this program, without the person being cared for leaving the community.

The program is designed to provide in-home respite, community based respite, long term / short-term respite or emergency respite (for example, you may require 4 hours, overnight care, or care for a week). The purpose of respite is to give a break to people who are caring for someone, as the carer's health is important. The respite program may also be used for the caree to attend social activities, particularly important in an isolated community like Mallacoota. There may be people in the community who are eligible for respite care but are not aware they can access the program.

Respite care is provided by trained and qualified home care workers. Clients are consulted in the development of a care plan to meet their specific needs. If you would like to know more about how to access respite care, contact the Home Care Coordinator, Ms. Jenny Griffiths on 51580633.

## On Going Programs contd...

### Community Nursing

The MDHSS community nursing team offers a range of services to residents as well as to many visitors to the Mallacoota and district region. Services include post acute care, palliative care, clinical nursing, assessments and health education. Home and centre-based care is available, with the majority of clients being provided care in their own homes. The nursing team consists of one full time nurse, 1 part time nurse and 2 casual nurses who cover week days as well as some weekends.

The nursing team provides: direct clinical nursing (including wound management); clinical assessments and referrals; development and implementation of care plans; monitoring of medication; palliative care and bereavement care; post acute care; personal care (clients with complex unstable health); venipuncture; domiciliary nursing; diabetes consultation; provision of in-home training for personal carers; and provision of health information and education for clients and their carers.

### Rural Allied Fly-in Service (RAFS)

The Australian Department of Health and Ageing provides funding for flights to Mallacoota on a monthly basis to transport visiting specialists who provide a service to MDHSS clients. Currently, practitioners who fly in monthly include: stoma / continence nurse, speech therapist and occupational therapist. From time to time other professionals access the flights, such as the Chief Executive Officer of MDHSS to attend CRG meetings, ICT and Human Resource personnel from Bairsndale Regional Health Service, Department of Human Services staff and Rural Ambulance Victoria personnel. The service provided by RAFS is critical to the diversity of resources available to MDHSS as a remote community.

### Emergency Relief Program

MDHSS has limited funds to assist people who are in a crisis situation. The Emergency Relief Program provides short-term limited support for people in need of food, petrol, utilities, transport, clothing, and pharmacy (prescriptions). MDHSS staff ensure that clients are treated with dignity and respect and may on occasions refer clients to services that may better meet their needs. For a small remote community, access to emergency relief can be very important.

### Neighbourhood House Support Groups

An enthusiastic group of women meet twice monthly in *The Friendship Sewing Group*. The combination of the sewing activities and social atmosphere has been a significant factor in the high quality and quantity of projects covered. The friendship sewing group exhibited their work at the volunteers and clients Christmas break up in December 2006. There was an incredible array of quilts, embroidery, tapestry and other sewing on display. The group has created three friendship quilts, one of which was presented to the MDHSS Manager, Ms. Celia Wallace, at last years Annual General Meeting. The quilt will soon be on display at the MDHSS Hall. The Friendship Sewing Group reconvenes on the first and third Thursday in February 07. New members are welcome.

#### MDHSS Community Reference Group

<b>President:</b>	Dr. Michael Drake	<b>Vice President:</b>	Ms. Greta Jessup
<b>Members:</b>	Ms. Lynne Casement, Senior Constable Stuart Johnston, Ms. Annette Peisley, Dr. Jenny Schlager, Mr. Gordon Symons, Ms. Sue Williamson, Ms. Prue Wootton		
<b>Ex-Officio:</b>	Mr. Gary Gray (CEO BRHS), Ms. Celia Wallace (Manager MDHSS)		



MDHSS is accredited through the Quality Improvement and Community Services Accreditation (QICSA)