

Welcome New Staff Members

• Dr. Ariel Pearce – Family Counsellor

Ariel Pearce has been appointed to the position of Family Counsellor at MDHSS. She comes to the role from the University of Ballarat where she was a Student Counsellor.

Just prior to coming to Mallacoota, Ariel had been seconded from the University of Ballarat to the Department of Human Services to undertake a temporary role as the Grampians Regional Bushfire Case Management Coordinator. This work involved Ariel in overseeing the coordination of the services provided to local people who had been affected by the Black Saturday bushfires. The service included assistance with access to grants, material aid and counselling.

Ariel's career as a social worker began following a period teaching in secondary schools, community development and work as an artist exhibiting in public and private galleries in Australia and overseas.

The community development work involved Ariel in providing art therapy for victims of violence, and in the co-development of the Protective Behaviour Program – a child safety program adapted for the Australian setting by number of community agencies in collaboration with the Victorian Police Force. Ariel completed a Bachelor of Arts in Social Science and a post graduate degree in Social Work. Whilst working in the community services and tertiary education sectors, Ariel completed her PhD.

Following on from her early period in the arts, Ariel's work can be roughly divided into three periods - aged psychiatry and family welfare, followed by a period in tertiary education, culminating in her work as a research fellow and consultant in the aged care and community welfare sectors.

At various times in her career, Ariel has headed up a number of teams and services including two hospital-based psychiatric assessment teams, two rural welfare services, and four tertiary training centres. The first of the tertiary training centres provided international distance education in emergency and disaster management, and the second centre provided scientific instrumentation training nationally. The third tertiary training centre delivered international training in dual diagnosis for alcohol and other drugs and mental health, and the fourth centre delivered training in community services and disability work in the Grampians region.

In the last few years, however, Ariel has returned to what she loves best – working directly with individuals and families through roles in counselling and family therapy.

Ariel's appointment as Family Counsellor at Mallacoota Health Centre will enable her to continue this interest, as well as bring to Mallacoota a wealth of experience and expertise. MDHSS is indeed fortunate to have acquired the services of such a well qualified and experienced professional.

• Holly Dayment – Occasional Child Care Worker

MDHSS would also like to welcome Holly Dayment, Occasional Child Care worker. Holly has ten years experience in childcare and has completed an Associate Diploma in Social Science (child studies).

Farewell

Recently MDHSS said farewell to three very valued members of staff, Jan Millicer (Receptionist), Geoff Sharpe (Occasional Child Care worker) and Giulia Tassone (Family Counsellor).

After 14 years working for MDHSS and making a significant contribution to the organisation, Jan has decided to retire. Geoff has worked as an Occasional Child Care worker for 8 years at MDHSS, however he has decided that it is time for him to expand his employment opportunities. Jan and Geoff will be back from time to time in a casual capacity. Giulia has taken up a full-time position in Shepparton, in order to be closer to family. Everyone at MDHSS wishes Jan, Geoff and Giulia a successful future.

Regular Services at MDHSS

Health Services:

- Home Care Services (home help, property maintenance, meals on wheels, personal care)
- Community Nursing
- Community Aged Care Packages
- National Respite for Carers Program
- Allied Health (podiatry, physiotherapy, dietitian, speech therapy)
- Family Counselling
- Health Promotion
- Dental Services
- Palliative Care/Post Acute Care
- Volunteer Transport Services
- Independent Living Units
- Rural Allied Fly-in Service
- Maternal and Child Health
- Men's Health Shed

Social Services:

- Planned Activity Group
- Emergency and Disability Services
- Youth Services

Community Services:

- Neighbourhood House
- Adult Community and Further Education
- Centrelink
- Telecentre
- Occasional Child Care

Visiting Services:

- Aged Care Assessment Service (ACAS)
- Alzheimer's Australia
- BreastScreen
- Continence Nurse
- Drug and Alcohol Counsellor
- Maternal and Child Health Nurse
- Occupational Therapy
- PapScreen
- Speech Therapy
- Thrifty Specs

The Community Reference Group

Mr Wayne Sullivan (CEO, MDHSS), Mr Tony Roberts (President), Ms Diana Appleton (Vice-President), Mr Michael Beedle, Ms Greta Jessup, Ms Annette Peisley, Dr Jennifer Schlager, Sergeant Andrew Scott, Ms Sue Williamson, Ms Prue Wootton and Ms Celia Wallace (Manager, MDHSS)

The Community Reference Group meets bi-monthly and provides a forum for discussion and feedback between the community and MDHSS. Members of the community are encouraged to bring issues/concerns to members of the Community Reference Group

MALLACOOTA HEALTH CENTRE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 7 - September 2009

Mallacoota Health Centre

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 community of Mallacoota, Gipsy Point, Genoa and district. Most programs at the Mallacoota Health Centre are available to all members of the community on a fee-for-service basis, with concession fees available to eligible clients. Programs offered at MDHSS which incur no charge are as follows: Health Promotion, Family Counselling, Maternal and Child Health, Flexible Care packages, Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, Neighbourhood House support groups, Youth Services and Centrelink. A fees brochure is available at MDHSS.

HEALTH SERVICES

Diabetes Service

MDHSS Community Nurse, Mary Ann Brooker, is an accredited diabetes educator. Mary Ann provides information, education, and support to anyone who has diabetes to help in its management. Though diabetes is a long term condition, understanding what diabetes is and how to manage it can make life easier for the person who has diabetes and family and friends. Mary Ann provides education, individual appointments, blood glucose monitoring (how to use your blood glucose meter, how accurate your blood glucose meter is reading), and referrals. The diabetes educator works closely with the podiatrist, dietician and occupational therapist to ensure clients receive the best possible care and quality services. This is a FREE service to community members.

People in the community who have diabetes are urged to seek assistance from the diabetes educator at the Health Centre.

Podiatry Service

The Podiatry service at MDHSS provides specialised assessment and treatment to clients with problems associated with their feet and lower legs. The service offers foot care advice and treatment, footwear advice, nail surgery, orthotics, and referrals to other health professionals eg. diabetes educator, dietician. Anyone in the community is eligible for an assessment.

Due to an increasing demand for this service, a priority access system has been implemented. All potential clients are required to undertake an initial intake assessment to prioritise their access. Priority is given to the following:

- Severe Peripheral Vascular Disease, which includes at risk insulin/non-insulin dependent diabetes
- Abnormal or absent sensation in feet and legs
- Severe/advanced arthritic conditions that impair ambulation
- Ingrown toe nails

Podiatry is a fee for service program (HACC Fees Policy applies). If you are experiencing problems with your feet and/or lower legs, you are urged to seek an assessment.

Drug and Alcohol Service

For some time, MDHSS has identified a need for drug and alcohol services for the Mallacoota and district community. MDHSS is pleased to advise Drug & Alcohol (D&A) Counselling sessions are now available at the Health Centre. The D&A Counsellor will be at the Health Centre one day per month. Clients can be referred by agencies, medical practitioners or self refer. For appointments contact Reception on 5158 0243 and ask to speak with one of the registered nurses.

Independent Living Units – Vacancies

MDHSS has several vacant one-bedroom independent living units. The units are located within easy walking distance of MDHSS facilities, the local medical practice and the shopping centre. The units offer a flexible and comfortable lifestyle for people who wish to live without problems associated with maintaining a home.

Residents enjoy friendship, independence, security and quality of life in comfortable surrounds. Allocation to an independent living unit is based on entry criteria.

If you or someone you know is interested in applying for a unit, an information package is available from MDHSS Reception, by telephoning 5158 0243 or email mdhss@vicnet.net.au



HEALTH PROMOTION

Mental Health 'Tackling the Topic' evening

"What a night" 140 community members attended the "Tackling the Topic" mental health forum at the Mallacoota Golf Club, hosted by MDHSS. Robert 'Dipper' DiPierdomenico discussed issues of physical health and wellbeing and Jim Sheedy, a mental health practitioner spoke about forms of mental illness and the importance of maximising wellness. Feedback from participants indicated that this was an overwhelmingly successful event.

Through the generosity of 'Dipper,' an auction was held, conducted by Mick Bartholomew (MC), with the prize package being a day at the football with 'dipper'. The auction raised \$1000.00 which MDHSS donated to the local fire brigade in recognition of the work undertaken by CFA volunteers.

During the day, 'Dipper' and Jim addressed staff and students at Mallacoota P-12 College in a classroom, and at school assembly. Topics discussed related to bullying (including cyber bullying), the importance of communication, drugs and alcohol, mental health issues, and looking after your mates.

The Tackling the Topic mental health program was funded by the Department of Health and Ageing, Regional Health Strategies Branch and is part of the MDHSS Community Health and Wellbeing Program (CHaW).



• Jim Sheedy, "Dipper" and Tony Roberts



• Riley Lott and "Dipper" at school assembly

Oral Health Promotion Primary School Students

MDHSS recently conducted an oral health care promotion program for primary school children. Invitations were extended to 75 children with 70 children participating. The program was aimed at teaching

children the value of oral health and ways in which they can take care of their teeth. It was a great opportunity for children to visit the dental clinic to 'try out' the dental chair and learn about dental care. Children were provided with an oral health care show bag which included a toothbrush, tooth paste, brochures and games. Plans are in place to follow up with further oral health care checks in the future.

The oral health promotion program was funded by the Department of Health and Ageing, Regional Health Strategies branch, and supported by the Mallacoota P-12 College.



• Dr Patrick O'Brien and Max Gilchrist

Dental Clinic

The dental clinic continues to be a highly successful health asset for the community, that has been well patronised. To date, 439 individual clients have been treated at the clinic. Clients attend not only from Mallacoota, Genoa and Gipsy Point, but from places in New South Wales – (Bega, Bermagui, Candelo, Cobargo, Cooma, Eden, Kiah, Merimbula, Quaama, Tathra, Timbilica, Towamba, Tura Beach, Wallagoot, Wingan, Wolumla, Wroxham, Wyndham and Yowrie). Victoria – (Bairnsdale, Cann River, Lakes Entrance, Orbost).

Some of the clients have been holiday makers who required emergency dental services, who have come not only from Victoria but from places as far away as Queensland (Bachus Marsh, Hawthorn, Keilor, Pakenham, Pascoe Vale, Beauty Point, Burpengary and Redland Bay). The ratio of clients shows a greater number from Mallacoota (284 clients) with New South Wales (99), and the remainder (56 clients).

For a small clinic, in a remote area, operating only one week per month, the referrals from outside Mallacoota have been unanticipated, but indicate the quality of the dental practitioner, Dr Patrick O'Brien and the high reputation of the Mallacoota Dental Clinic. Being a small and resourceful community, MDHSS has been able to offer all clients, in particular those traveling from New South Wales, with chronic medical conditions, pre and post dental care that has drawn comment from patients and practitioners "that generally you don't get this kind of care in other places". Mallacoota Health Centre is pleased to have the facilities to offer this kind of care. Mallacoota Dental Clinic is registered with Medicare to offer Teen Dental Services, DVA, and Enhanced Primary Care Scheme program to eligible clients. Clients are bulk billed for these services. The clinic offers HICAPS and EFTPOS facilities.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Neighbourhood House – ICT Upgrade

Successful funding from the Department of Planning and Community Development enabled MDHSS to upgrade technology in the Neighbourhood House (Telecentre).

The purchase of 8 new DELL computers, one Apple Mac computer, 8 Upsonic Power Supplies and a 52 inch LCD screen, will greatly enhance the services and learning activities offered by the Neighbourhood House.

Computer classes, digital photography and the camera club, are some of the activities that will benefit from the new equipment. This is a very exciting step forward for the Neighbourhood House and the Telecentre.

If you are interested in any of the computing and photography activities contact either the Neighbourhood House Coordinator, Ms Susie Vatcher, or the administrative assistant, Ms Belinda Phillips, for more information.

- Tutor Michael Rayner Photoshop classes in the Telecentre



SOCIAL SERVICES

National Youth Week 'Coota Live' danced the night away

The Mallacoota Mudbrick Pavillion was jumping with an incredible line-up of young musical talent on Friday 24th April 2009 at the disco provided for youth aged between 12 to 25 years as part of National Youth Week.

Local artists, River Romeo on guitar, The Mallacoota All Stars, Ele Mason-Sakkas and Rachel Severs, entertained the young crowd with an exceptional quality performance. The bands from New South Wales, TNT and Cried Wolf, were very popular on the night.

- Ryley Broome on drums



Victorian Patient Transport Scheme (VPTAS)

The VPTAS provides a partial subsidy for the travel and accommodation costs incurred by rural Victorians and an approved escort, when traveling long distances or staying away from home, to receive medical specialist services. Administrative amendments to the VPTAS Scheme came into effect on the 1st July 2009. This is great news that will benefit people using the service, who need to travel more than 100km to get to their nearest medical/specialist appointments. Some amendments include:

- Patients will no longer have to have their claim forms signed by their GP (a valid referral is still required)
- GP's will no longer be required to endorse air travel
- In situations where patients travel beyond the 'nearest' medical specialist for treatment, based on their specific clinical needs, there is no requirement for additional GP authorisation
- Verifying the service details and patient requirements can now be undertaken by either the approved medical specialist or an authorised officer (an individual that works with/for the specialist)
- Patients are no longer required to submit copies of their Concession card
- The lodgement time for claims has been extended to 12 months

To read more about the changes and to access new application forms follow the link below or pick up a form from MDHSS Reception www.health.vic.gov.au/ruralhealth/vptas/index.htm

The night would not have been such a success without the assistance of a considerable number of people. MDHSS acknowledges the assistance of the staff and students of Mallacoota P-12 College, Mallacoota Police, Ambulance Victoria Mallacoota Branch, and volunteers Lynda Mackintosh, Don Ashby and Glen Warren. This event was funded by the Department of Planning and Community Development and supported by "beyondblue."

As part of MDHSS community support, money was raised from the sale of soft drinks and food, which resulted in \$189.00 being donated to the Mallacoota Surf Life Saving Club.

- Local youth enjoying the entertainment

