

MALLACOOTA HEALTH CENTRE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 8 - April 2010

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 PROMOTION

Noeline Brown, Ambassador for Ageing for the Australian Government, visits Mallacoota



On Wednesday 17th of March 2010, a highly successful 'dinner and speakers' evening was held in the MDHSS Miva Building at which Ms. Noeline Brown formally from the Mavis Bramston Show was the keynote speaker for an evening devoted to the topic "Activities that strengthen an ageing body and help prevent accidents and falls".

Ms Brown was supported by Mr Terry Houge (Mallacoota Paramedic), Dr David Appleton (Mallacoota Medical Practice), Dr Ariel Pearce (MDHSS Family Counsellor), Ms Pat Helmore (MDHSS Physiotherapist), Ms Barbara Morland (MDHSS Aerobics Instructor) and Mr Bob Semmens (MDHSS Volunteer).

The program was organised by the Health Promotion Nurse, Ms Penny Seears, and MDHSS staff as part of the Community Health and Well-being Program. Each speaker covered different aspects of 'falls prevention' and, according to feedback from participants, the evening was very informative and highly successful. Indeed, the format of the evening is a model that could be adopted in the future.

Coming Up: 'Physical Health and Men in the Community'

A program funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, Regional Health Strategies Branch, is being organised as the next health promotion activity for the community. Research shows that some men do not take as much care of their health as they should, particularly as they get older.

MDHSS plans to develop a physical health profile of men in Mallacoota and district community. This profile would contain information regarding blood pressure, waist measurement, weight and physical flexibility. MDHSS has invited Dr Peter Larkins, a sports and exercise physician from Melbourne, as keynote speaker for a health promotion activity to be held on the 9th June 2010, at the MDHSS Miva Building.

Dr Larkins is a regularly invited speaker and author on a wide range of health and fitness topics, and for over ten years he has been a medical commentator on Channel 9 Television and Triple M Radio, particularly on matters

relating to AFL football and sports medicine, and he also has a regular column in the Herald Sun Newspaper. He has been involved in sport and fitness activities all his life and represented Australia in track and field as a middle distance runner.

All men in the community are invited to attend. There is no cost for this event and dinner and refreshments is included on the night. Bookings are essential as numbers are limited.



Dr. Peter Larkins

Recent Achievements at MDHSS

Video-conferencing facility

A Video-conferencing facility has been established with the refurbishment of the physiotherapy room to provide a conference room and communication equipment. This means that MDHSS can now offer improved training facilities for staff, opportunities for client consultation with external practitioners, and access to other practitioners, both in Australia and Overseas.

The Video-conferencing equipment was funded by the Australian Government, Department of Health and Ageing Regional Health Strategies Branch, and the cost of the building refurbishment and fittings was funded by the Australian Government, Department of Health and Ageing, National Rural and Remote Health Infrastructure Program.

New Bus

MDHSS received delivery of a new Mercedes 12- seater bus this month. Features include UHF radio, high roof for better movement within the bus, window airbags, towbar, reversing camera, front bulbar, automatic, diesel motor and automatic sliding door. The bus was funded by the Victorian Department of Health.



• Delivery of new MDHSS bus - left to right Mr Greg Blakeley, Manager for Acute Health and Aged Care, Mr Paul Butler, Regional Director for Health, Department of Health and Ms Celia Wallace, Manager MDHSS.

Capital Works

Visitors to MDHSS may have noticed that the Miva Building has been re-carpeted, which was funded through MDHSS Capital budget.

The Department of Health has allocated minor capital funding (\$30,000) to MDHSS to replace existing skylights to all buildings in order to reduce fire hazard.

Signage

The program of improving the signage in all areas of the Health Centre has been ongoing for some time and is now complete. Individual buildings have been clearly identified including the Mattsson House, Miva Building, Dental Clinic, The Shed, Neighbourhood House, and large prominent signs have been erected at both ends of the facility identifying the whole complex as the Mallacoota Health Centre. This program was prompted by feedback from community members, the community reference group, visitors to Mallacoota, government officials visiting the complex, and holiday makers who often remarked that it was difficult to find the Health Centre.

The review consultants of QICSA from the recent accreditation identified a need for clearer signage. Further, the new signage has helped to differentiate the Health Centre from the Medical Practice. People driving into Mallacoota have remarked that it is now much easier to find the Health Centre.

HEALTH SERVICES

Emergency Relief Program

Supplementary funding of \$15,000 has been received from the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (facsia) in order to provide assistance to people in the community in need of emergency dental care at the MDHSS Dental Clinic. This funding is available to assist people who are in receipt of a health care card / pension card holders. The funding is a short term allocation and is available only until June 2011. For more information contact MDHSS Reception on 51580243.

Allied Health Services

Programs provided in Allied Health Services comprise, Continence / Stomal Care, Diabetes Education, Dietitian Services, Occupational Therapy, Podiatry, Physiotherapy, and Speech Therapy. MDHSS provides regular podiatry, physiotherapy and dietetic services to the community. Podiatry services are provided on a monthly basis, with home visits scheduled for people unable to access the Health Centre due to frailty and or disability. A dietitian offers services to clients at the Centre on a monthly basis. This service involves assessment, diagnosis, treatment and nutritional counselling for dietetic needs.

The physiotherapist undertakes client consultation, assessment and some home visits twice per week. For further information on Allied Health Services contact MDHSS Reception on 51580243.

Rural Allied Fly-in Service (RAFS)

The Australian Department of Health and Ageing provides funding for flights to Mallacoota on a monthly basis in order to transport visiting specialists who provide a service to MDHSS clients. Currently, practitioners who fly-in monthly are as follows: continence nurse, podiatrist, speech therapist and occupational therapist. Further, other professionals access flights as required, such as the Chief Executive Officer of MDHSS to attend Community Reference Group meetings, ICT and Human Resource personnel from Bairnsdale Regional Health Service, Victorian Department of Health 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.

Volunteer Transport Service

The Volunteer Transport Service provides transport assistance to eligible people in the community to attend specialist medical appointments outside of Mallacoota. This service extends to Bega, NSW, Canberra, ACT, and in Victoria, Orbost, Lakes Entrance and Bairnsdale. Volunteers predominantly utilise their own vehicles and are reimbursed by MDHSS. To find out more about the Volunteer Transport service contact MDHSS Reception on 51580243.

SOCIAL SERVICES

The Planned Activity Group (PAG) is the largest program in social services, funded through the HACC program. For a remote and isolated community like Mallacoota, with a high percentage of the population in older age groups, activity groups are important for social wellbeing, particularly for older people and people living alone. The PAG program is designed for people 65 years of age who are physically independent and do not require specialist care in order to participate in activities, and also people with a disability.

Activities offered through the PAG program are designed to provide clients with physical, social, intellectual and emotional stimulation. The PAG program operates five days per week and includes some weekend excursions.

National Youth Week 17th April 2010

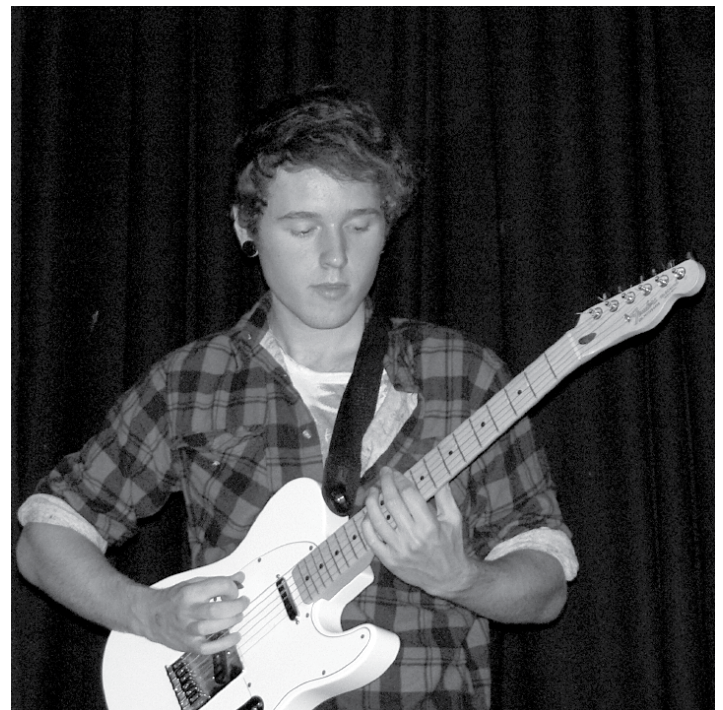
MDHSS conducted another successful National Youth Week event program, 'Coota Live 2' in partnership the Mallacoota P12 College.

The program consisted of a Hip Hop Workshop with Elf Tranzporter, commencing at 3pm, and from 4.30pm to 10pm artists such as River Romeo, South Reign and Cried Wolf led a highly stimulating live music evening which was well attended by local youth and youth from Cann River (12 - 18 years). The young people of Mallacoota greatly appreciate the National Youth Week Activities run by MDHSS.

These programs could not be organised without the help of the Mallacoota Police, Mallacoota Ambulance, Mallacoota P-12 College teachers and students, and the generous support of community volunteers such as Mr Don Ashby, Mr Glen Warren, Ms Linda Mackintosh and Mr John Frazer.

National Youth Week was funded by the Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development and supported by *beyondblue*.

This was an alcohol free, drug free, smoke free, fully supervised event.



Local artist River Romeo

Client Survey

In November 2009, clients of the MDHSS were surveyed as part of the ongoing quality improvement procedures undertaken by MDHSS. The purpose of the survey was to find out how clients perceived the quality and effectiveness of programs provided by MDHSS.

Of the 46 programs offered by MDHSS, some programs have very few clients and other programs would not be appropriate for this type of survey. Programs with the greatest number of clients were selected for survey. Clients who accessed the survey over the preceding twelve month period were selected to participate.

A total of 13 programs were selected for survey as follows: Five from Health Services (Nursing, Podiatry, Physiotherapy, Home Care, Property Maintenance) Three from Social Services, Planned Activity Group (Gentle exercises, Bridge Club, Centre-Based Meals) and four from Community Services (Telecentre, Computer Classes, Yoga and Playgroup). The response rate was very pleasing with 57% responding with the exception of the Telecentre and Playgroup.

Overall responses were very favourable with clients rating highly the services offered by MDHSS. Some areas of concern were identified and staff and volunteers will address these areas in the future. There was a high demand for podiatry services with recommendations to increase the number of visits; however, since the date of the survey, there is no longer a waiting list for podiatry services.

In response to a question regarding costs of Centre-Based meals, the majority of respondents considered that the cost should be increased by \$2.00. The low response rate from the Telecentre is a matter of concern as this a MDHSS funded program and accessed by a large number of people. Further evaluation of the Telecentre program will be undertaken in the future.

Farewell – Penny Seears

Recently, MDHSS farewelled Ms Penny Seears (Registered Nurse). Penny worked with MDHSS in the area of nursing and health promotion for two years and will be greatly missed by all staff. We wish Penny every success in her new role at the Mallacoota Pharmacy.

Welcome – Nicola Gorwell

Nicola Gorwell has been appointed to the position of Community Nurse. Nicola will be undertaking a range of community nursing and health promotion activities. We look forward to working with Nicola.

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
- Maternal and Child Health
- Rural Allied Fly-in Service
- 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
- Occasional Child Care
- Telecentre

Visiting Services:

- Aged Care Assessment Service (ACAS)
- Alzheimer's Australia
- Audiologist
- BreastScreen
- Continence Nurse
- Drug and Alcohol Counsellor
- Occupational Therapy
- PapScreen
- Speech Therapy

The Community Reference Group

Mr Wayne Sullivan (CEO, MDHSS), Mr Tony Roberts (President), Ms Diana Appleton (Vice-President), Mr Michael Beedle, Ms Greta Jessup, Mr Terry Houge, 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