

ABN: 70 919 772 959



**NORTH RYDE COMMUNITY AID
& INFORMATION CENTRE INC.**

2008 – 2009

MANAGEMENT REPORT



Annual General Meeting
September 2009

COMMITTEE of MANAGEMENT REPORT

Last year's outgoing Chairperson, Mrs Christine Bennett, expressed her hopes and reasons why this year would be rewarding. It has been another successful year for NRCA with access to services and patronage of activities continuing to grow. The Committee is encouraged that the Centre staff is ensuring a high quality of service, driven by the needs of our clients, most of which are our organisation's members.

It has also been a year of change – obvious and not so obvious change.

Changes to the elected Committee since the previous AGM were mainly due to family reasons. The service of the Chairperson Dr Ruby Campbell and other Members who resigned mid term was certainly appreciated by NRCA. I further acknowledge the service to NRCA of Christine Bennett who held a number of roles, including Chairperson, during her sterling service. The vital role of Chairman has been shared by Pat Perrin and myself since January.

Our Centre Manager, Sandra Foley resigned in June, to improve her work/life balance with her family after preparing the Centre for further changes to our day to day operation.

The not so obvious changes were internal. Some were related to our duty of care and fiscal obligations to the Dept of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) and Dept of Community Services (DOCS), yet most are improvements in the pursuit of excellence, greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Helen Crouch was engaged by the Committee on assignment with five (5) key objectives:

- define the status and therein focus on how to progress the building development of the Centre with Council and/or other parties,
- provide an independent assessment of fundraising efforts and explore new opportunities to complement the Centre's core objectives
- contribute to the growth and development of the Centre by formulating improvements in its systems and management
- understand the outcomes of the Centre and assist the Manager where required to elevate the delivery and efficiency of service
- act in an advisory capacity to the Board of Management of NRCA

We are delighted Helen agreed to continue her reforms by acting as our Centre Manager until recruitment of a new Manager for our revitalized aid organization.

Pivotal to our revitalization is the long-spoken of redevelopment of our premises at 4 Cutler Parade. It is with pleasure we advise that, with the assistance of Ryde Council, an application has been made to the State Government under the Building Community Partnership Funding Grant. Our application, submitted on behalf of the Ryde Early Childhood Centre as co-tenant, has the full support of Mr Victor

Dominello, State Member for Ryde. Our application has been acknowledged as received by the Premier's Department and we anxiously await the outcome. If (or when) successful, plans will be set in motion for a February commencement and a planned September 2010 completion.

Strategic partnerships with our Ryde-based corporations shall continue to play an important role in our financial health. Whether by sponsorship of programs or events, or simply donation of cash, kind or time; global citizenship within community contributions is vital for NRCA to continue to deliver the vital services for our frail aged, disabled, their carers and the disadvantaged.

For the Centre team to be able to meet the demands of their roles, for our clients and our stakeholders, change is well underway in the improvements to our back-office operation. While our systems' infrastructure might not rival an average commercial enterprise, our team's understanding for the need for change, for growth and improvement in efficiency and effectiveness is appreciated.

The area of Ryde is similarly changing. As part of the Council's 2030 Project, Service Providers and Community Facilities are under review. Key findings confirm providers consider no surplus capacity exists for services to change or expand or increase staff levels. Also, to meet Ryde residents' needs, an increase in availability of community transport buses and a reliance on public transport is seen as key to breaking down isolation especially among the frail-aged and people with disabilities – NRCA's client

I would like to make special mention of the dedication of the members of your Committee of Management who during the significant changes that have occurred throughout the year, have continued to steadfastly fulfill their various roles to the benefit of NRCA. I would also like to especially thank Pat Perrin for doing extra duty standing in for me during my absence overseas.

As the dynamics of our local area change, so must our services and our approach to fulfilling the linked role within our community, by linking delivery of care, respect and dignity. Thank you for your continued support of our organization through membership, donation and endorsement of our change.

J. S. Hull, OAM
Chairman

CENTRE MANAGEMENT REPORT

Miss Helen Crouch

It is a pleasure to be acting as Centre Manager for such an organisation as North Ryde Community Aid & Information Centre - integral to the enhanced well being of the frail aged, the disabled, and the carers of these community members. Providing choices and assistance, with care and dignity, to aid and extend their independence remains our governing charter, and our organisation's contribution to the City of Ryde is vital.

The strategic direction of NRCA is guided by the New South Wales Home and Community Care (HACC) Program that is administered by the Dept of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC). Similarly our programs under the Dept of Community Services (DOCS) are reflective of our area's needs within State Government priorities.

HACC is committed to progressing the outcomes of Community Care Review - the development of common arrangements to improve and strengthen the community care system. So must NRCA. As our Committee of Management has highlighted, our internal reforms are under way.

The Service priorities identified by DADHC during 2008-2011 are to maximise service outputs. Maximising results. To be achieved by: increased co-ordination within the sector, increasing capacity of community transport services, undertaking food service development, and the promotion of development of volunteering in the HACC sector. All for the better meeting of needs of current and future HACC clients. Therefore the roadmap for our future is clear, not only because of our reliance on government funding. They make sense, however:

Community care is personal, emotive and subjective. Our staff must deliver results in this environment sensitively to the client, yet efficiently and effectively for our commercial venture, albeit not for profit. This challenge is a constant struggle. The team, with their hearts of gold and greatest intentions, are recognising the need for change, so as to be viable and prepared in the future.

As you read the individual program reports prepared by our Co-Ordinators, please imagine the results that could be achieved from an improved building, yes, but more importantly more funding and more volunteers. Pursuit of this 'golden fleece' will be my personal aim for the coming year, building on the results of the 2008-2009 year.

The HACC target population in the Northern Sydney region is estimated as 12% of the State's total, 2nd highest percentage in the State. 67% of the region's share of HACC clients has no carer. The population projections from the Dept of Health and Ageing see these statistics growing in the Ryde area. For our clients today, and our clients tomorrow, we must be a strong and

viable community aid centre, with strong ties to our Council, our corporate residents and community residents.

On behalf of the team, I acknowledge the tremendous support of Ryde Council, particularly the Community Services personnel and their volunteer referrals, North Ryde RSL and their community grants that enable so many of our services and programs to continue, and our other key sponsors, contributors and donors. The knitters at Boehringer, the Sisters of Charity, our area's schools and churches and their members, or simply residents buying a raffle ticket and our members who might not just have paid their membership fee but donated more. Thank you.

And our volunteers. A little means a lot to our success and we thank each and every one of our volunteers. But I would be remiss if I did not recognise a core group of too few that give so much, some daily, some every week. Our service provision is totally reliant on their dedication and care.

North Ryde Community Aid & Information Centre. It is humbling, it is invigorating, it is frustrating, it is rewarding. The city of Ryde is all the better for its operation and your membership makes it possible. Your support is appreciated. Your ongoing support is vital. Your commitment and involvement in your organisation – NRCA – is critical.

2008 – 2009 Achievements, to name but a few:

- Client Care Co-ordination - 331 Clients helped ... some a little, most a lot
- Shopping Trips - 571 undertaken
- Linen Changes - 944 beds and 944 bathrooms
- Social Events - 678 events
- Multicultural Matters - 139 events
- Lawns Mowed - we lost count at 3,383
- Neighbour Aid - over 900 hours of driving, gardening, maintenance help or home visiting
- Food Aid - over 180 food parcels & 180 Christmas Hampers

Finalist, Northern District Times Business Achiever Awards – Community Service

Volunteer Thank You Morning Tea

Certificate of Appreciation, City of Ryde - Lovely Linen Ladies

ARMENIAN SOCIAL SUPPORT & CARE CO-ORDINATION

Mrs Ophelia Amirchian



The Armenian elderly often have English language barriers and find it very difficult - sometimes impossible - to access required services. By grouping my role into two I am now able to ensure NRCA supports these worthy residents of Ryde holistically. The Social Support & Volunteer Visiting Program (VVP) reduces social isolation and via our specialist language volunteers we monitor and implement Care Coordination & Advocacy.

The highlight of the social program continues to be the Armenian Weekly Social Event held in Ryde's Argyle Hall with morning tea, playing bingo, listening to music and celebrating cultural or special occasions eg. Mothers Day, Fathers Day, Easter. I also arrange guest speakers from different services so our clients gain useful information about health, safety etc. Additionally, I now lead two bus outings each month, for our non-English clients to enjoy a day outside their homes in a positive step towards helping them out of isolation and creating a healthy environment for them.

The number of Armenian clients has grown from 65 to 91 this year and is still growing very rapidly. 5 clients have been assisted to receive priority Dept of Housing accommodation this year. These clients' needs are also more regularly assessed and my assistance to resolve their diverse issues is more targeted and successful.

My goals for the coming year are to undertake further relevant training to ensure my help to clients is more effective. As I constantly facilitate the building of the strongest bridge of communication between Armenian Social Group, our Ryde community and NRCA, I will focus on attracting younger Armenian volunteers so as to be able to run the best VVP program possible. I will also endeavour to find Armenian corporate sponsors to help recover some of the client costs incurred for participation in social activities.

Clients must always be my main concern and as such, better social activities, as well as helping them get better information and access to the best services available in the area, is key to my success as NRCA's Armenian Social Support & Care Co-ordinator.

CLIENT CARE CO-ORDINATION

**Ms Jacki Evans
Mrs Nuala Williams**

Our service targets people who, in the absence of appropriate support services, are at risk of premature or inappropriate residential care admission. Being unaware of available support services or lacking access via a co-ordinated approach to these service provisions is why NRCA's Client Care program with information, advocacy and referral is so critical for our community. It has been proven time and time again this year how our co-ordination makes a significant improvement to clients' overall sense of wellbeing and quality of life.

We have introduced new systems for assessing and recording client data to help reduce the risk of clients missing out on essential services, as well as capturing vital data to build future funding opportunities via DADHC. In the 2008/09 financial year, NRCA assisted an average of six (6) new client referrals per week – a slow but steady growth.

Both client and client carer needs continue to be challenging and our ability to immediately respond with support and links to essential services is crucial, particularly due to the frequency of issues concerning admission to residential care, life threatening illness, bereavement or suicide.

In the coming year we will continue to strive for flexible service provision to meet such diverse needs, as well as investigate improved promotion of our service to reach the isolated who remain unaware that help is at hand. As well as exploring opportunities for additional funding. In this way, our service will assist clients to continue to live independently at home, with an increased confidence in their ability to enjoy an improved quality of life and sense of well being.



LINEN & SHOPPING PROGRAMS

Mrs Kaye Bracken



I am pleased to report on a successful year for both programs. During the past 12 months I have been very lucky to be assisted by Stephanie Harrisson who has combined her extensive volunteer hours with six employed hours, to help facilitate both the Linen and Shopping programs. Stephanie always has two or three Shopping clients waiting to be matched with a volunteer.

The fortnightly Linen service program continues with the generosity of professionally laundered Linen provided by AlSCO Linen and now provides to 35 regular clients – up by 23 clients since the program began. Linen volunteers have grown and diminished throughout the year, yet fortunately there is a core group of dedicated, reliable helpers including seven ladies who originally started with the program back in 2006. We have a keen and anxious waiting list of clients wanting regular service, plus the ever growing short-term need clients whom we serve using Centre staff.

The Shopping program closed the year with 21 regular clients supported by 21 volunteers, the majority of whom enjoy door to door assistance by their volunteer. Three of our clients are taken to Macquarie Centre by Ryde Hunters Hill Transport and then met at Macquarie by their volunteer. It is important to remember our Shopping program is not only essential for the shopping of provisions – it provides social independence and interaction support that is vital to our client for their wellbeing as well as strengthening the bond between the individual and our community, especially as most volunteers and clients generally stop for a coffee and a chat before or after errands!

My motivation is the meeting and continual contact with all our clients and volunteers. I am always inspired by our wonderful volunteers who are happy to give their time and regularly help members of our community to remain independent in their own homes.

Growth of our Linen and Shopping is more dependent on volunteers, than any other program or activity offered by NRCA. My prime target is to build the base of Linen and Shopping volunteers, as well as the periodic helpers that assist us for short periods. We must build capacity in the next financial year.

MULTICULTURAL MOTHERS' GROUP

Mrs Aysel Vallotton

Multicultural Mothers' Group (MMG), the social group for mothers and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, meets for two hours once a week during school terms. It is the only service and program supported by DOCS within NRCA, and not designed for the frail aged or disabled. Toys and activities are provided for children to allow mothers to interact with other group members every week, while Guest speakers are invited monthly to hold workshops/give talks on issues related to parenting, health, our Australian social system, and other topics of interest.

In 2009 8-12 mothers attended the group weekly, with numbers traditionally higher in summer than in winter. Four volunteers are actively involved.

It has been rewarding this year to see mums socialize with each other outside the group hours and coordinated networking, to help one another with babysitting, shopping and transport. For some mothers MMG is their *only* social network, proving how essential our service is to non-English background mothers in our community.

In 2010 we aim to expand the group to 10-12 mums in winter and 12-15 mums in summer. We will continue to offer monthly workshops however, shift the focus from parenting/children to mothers and their own interests since a yoga session in August was so successful. We must also facilitate the group to take part in a local event/activity to give these wonderful mothers a chance to be involved as well as meet other members of the community.



SOCIAL GROUPS PROGRAM

Mrs Lyn Wicks

The past year, still a learning curve, has run more smoothly for the four weekly social groups:

- Monday Morning Tea at Kent Road
- Tuesday Lunch group at the Centre
- Wednesday Men's lunch group at the Centre, and
- Thursday Morning Tea at the Centre.

The new Wednesday Men's Lunch group is a great success. While attendance numbers do go up and down due to the age of the clients and their medical needs, the tangible benefit of social interactions is fantastic. Many of these male clients have become friends and look forward to seeing each other each week. It is great to hear them greet each other with a "Hello, mate".

Each of the four groups has diverse needs and wants. The Tuesday and Thursday groups are offered a bus trip each month, to which every client of NRCA is extended an invitation. The men just want to meet & lunch here at the Centre although when numbers are small we organise a local outing and the Monday Kent Road group is always onsite as the format does not warrant off-site trips.

However, they do reflect the day by day contingencies that must be dealt with when delivering social activities. Understanding the diversity of the clients needs between the groups, as well as within each group, shall allow me to target growth in participation, albeit with the challenge of transport requirements, limited transport options and seasonal influences.

A base of 14 volunteers help with social programs each week. While communication is active, an annual meeting – held in August this year - enabled everyone to discuss issues, ideas and ideals to be pursued in our social program delivery to the worthy aged, disabled and their carers here in North Ryde.

The actual numbers of attendance is not indicative of the fundamental needs & benefits of social programs.



SOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS

**Ms Heidi Gardner
Mrs Carolin Wilkinson**

2008-2009 has been another very busy year on all our "Neighbour Aid" services, as we provide valuable and much appreciated assistance to our local community.

The Emergency Food Relief Program provided 30% more food parcels than in 2007-2008 to local residents and food hampers filled with festive treats to 98 individuals and families.



We received tremendous donations of food throughout the year and NRCA particularly acknowledges the support of: Mr Victor Dominello (Member for Ryde), North Ryde Community Church, Macquarie Presbyterian Church, Seventh Day Adventist Church, Reformed Church of North Ryde, Ryde Secondary College, Ryde East Primary School, North Ryde Public School, Rotary Club of North Ryde, Ryde Guides, Terumo Corporation, and North Ryde Girl Guides.

Franklins at Cox's Road is another valuable supporter of this program, with a trolley at the front of the store where people can donate food items. Donations from these organisations and residents in our community enable us to keep our cupboards stocked with food.

We continue to receive numerous requests for Individual Transport, Gardening and Light Home Maintenance assistance. Although the program is co-ordinated by the Centre, we rely totally on volunteers to provide the service. Home visiting by volunteers is also a program that entails exacting care in its administrative tasks.

Our Lawn Mowing program, run in conjunction with North Ryde RSL Community Club has 199 clients at present and goes from strength to strength each year, providing a much needed service to the community.

Our computer classes are extremely popular with 48 pupils attending either our "Introduction to Computers" course or one of our workshops on "Internet/Email" useage over the past year.

All of the above programs are important components of the service we offer at NRCA, and I rely on a wonderful group of volunteers to assist me in endeavouring to meet the needs of people in the community.

To continue to grow these programs, raise awareness in the community of the services we offer and recruit valuable volunteers to help run the programs is my ongoing priority in the year ahead.