

A Word from

Issue 4, December 2013

Julie Hillier, Branch & Community Development Manager

Can Assist has had a very busy 2013 with too-numerous-to-mention branch events and fundraising activities, six regional meetings, a branch consultation in Sydney, the roll out of the work health & safety guidelines for volunteers and a successful year of our interim accommodation service at Quest Bondi Junction.

2014 promises to be just as eventful – the charity sector has changed a great deal since the inception of Cancer Patients Assistance Society NSW in the early 1960s. Charities now have a much higher level of responsibility and legislative compliance.

The National Volunteer Standards for Not for Profit Organisations have been written with the intention of protecting the volunteer, the volunteer-involving organisation and customer of the organisation.

Can Assist will be working towards complying with the standards with the aim of ensuring your rights are protected, your role within Can Assist is clear and that you work in safe and healthy environments, whilst ensuring Can Assist will meet its various obligations.

In early 2014 the branch and fundraising committee executives will be invited to provide feedback on a draft Volunteer Handbook, Volunteer Role Descriptions and some other policy documents.

Branches and fundraising committees will also receive updated guidelines which will replace the branch manual.

I look forward to working together with volunteers and members in the New Year, but for now I would like to thank you all for your tireless work for Can Assist in 2013 and wish you all season's greetings and a happy and healthy 2014.

Julie



Can Assist Administration Update

Branch Membership & Executive Roles FY13/14

A final reminder; all Branch Executives and Branch memberships for the 2013/2014 financial year are now due into the head office. If you haven't already sent these details through, please do so ASAP.

Can Assist Head Office Christmas closure

The head office will be closed from the afternoon of Friday 20th December 2013 and reopen on Monday 6th January 2014. We wish all of you a happy and safe Christmas and New Year break with your loved ones.

Keeping Safe

Since the launch of Keeping Safe – volunteer work health safety in April 2013, over 90% of branches and fundraising committees have had member/s trained in the process via the regional meetings.

As promised, training will be provided via our website in early 2014 which will be easy to use. This will allow members/volunteers to read the guidelines, view the training slides and answer 9 simple questions from the comfort of their homes. Once you have completed the training, head office will receive an electronic notification.

In the meantime, head office is reviewing the Keeping Safe process and based on feedback from volunteers, those branches and fundraising committees that hold meetings in commercially managed venues such as RSL or leagues clubs only need to complete the *Regular Branch Meeting Place Checklist* annually, rather than quarterly. The guidelines will be updated shortly.

Thank you for all branches and fundraising committees complying with the guidelines and we will be in touch with those branches and fundraising committees who require some assistance in early 2014.

Keeping Safe hint

To comply with our Keeping Safe guidelines please remember to:

- ✓ Report any incidents or accidents to head office
- ✓ Complete the simple checklists and retain with the branch for 1 year
- ✓ Always record WHS or Keeping Safe in branch meeting minutes and send to head office

Keeping Safe tip

As many branches and fundraising committees use barbecues for fundraising events, it is important to remember to service and maintain your barbecue regularly. Check cylinders for rust or damage and make sure connections are clear and fit properly before lighting. Check the date on your cylinder also to make sure it's in date. For more information on barbecue safety, visit Fire & Rescue NSW's information page: <http://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/page.php?id=323>.

In the News

Parkes President Pat Bailey awarded

Can Assist Parkes branch secretary Pat Bailey was recently awarded the Government of NSW Community Service Award, which recognises people who have substantially contributed to the improvement of the quality of life of members of their community. Branch members as well as family and friends were present for the occasion. "She has worked tirelessly for more than two decades with Can Assist helping cancer patients and their families," MP Troy Grant said, as he presented her with the award. "She is one of the first people to reach out to those most in need. Pat said she made a pledge after the death of her husband to help people and their families suffering from cancer. "I wanted to ensure others did not have to go through what our family had to endure," she said. Congratulations Pat on your well-deserved award!

See Gallery for photos of Pat receiving her award.

Focus On: A year at Quest

One year later and our 'interim' location for the Can Assist Sydney Accommodation Service has been a home away from home for hundreds of cancer patients from rural NSW requiring specialist treatments in Sydney in 2013. Our Wellness Officer Jan says "Every day has highlights!", and all our guests love the socialising, therapy, and *distraction* provided every week by the Wellness Program.

Here are a few of the stand out moments for 2013:

The Can Assist guests and our amazing volunteer drivers were treated to complementary seats at the Country Cancer Rescue Lunch in May this year. It was a fantastic day with attendees including Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner and the Premier's wife Rosemary O'Farrell, and entertainment by Royden Donohue – The Voice of the King. All up over \$140,000 was raised, and guests and volunteers alike said they felt privileged to have been a part of the day.

It's a small world! One of our volunteer drivers was surprised to find a familiar face on the bus in July. Our regular Thursday driver Tien went to school in Murwillumbah with one of our mid-year guests. They recognised each other quickly, as the guest was in the same class as Tien's brother.

On Melbourne Cup Day the head office staff headed over to the hotel to throw a party for our guests. We had fancy hats and sweeps tickets for purchase, and enjoyed champagne and nibbles while watching the race. Our lovely lady guests donned sashes for the best hat competition and won some fabulous prizes. A great time was had by all (especially those lucky enough to draw the winning horse in the sweeps!).

Special mention also needs to be given to the regular Thursday sailing trips. Every Thursday the Wellness Program includes an outing, to varied locations such as Fort Denison, the Sydney Opera House, or the Victoria Barracks War Museum. However, most guests agree that the best outing is sailing around beautiful Sydney Harbour. Thanks to another charity – the Rushcutters Bay branch of Sailability – our guests are able to spend a few hours viewing the sights of Sydney Harbour from a yacht for only \$10 per person.

Our current arrangement of 10 rooms with Quest Bondi Junction will continue through 2014, while we continue to explore other long term options for the Sydney Accommodation Service.



Quest guests: Melbourne Cup Fashions on the field.



Quest guests enjoying the Country Cancer Rescue Lunch.

Profile

Robb College fundraising a success

It has been a successful year as Robb College's charity of the year. The college, which is part of the University of New England in Armidale, has done some remarkable work in preaching about our work and the inequities that rural cancer patients face when accessing health services.

In July, students participated in the college's 'Project Week', which saw them wear pyjamas for an entire week. The pyjamas had the Can Assist logo printed across the back of them, and proved a successful way to spread the word and funds for Can Assist. "Wearing pyjamas is meant to be symbolic of comfort in regards to the accommodation that Can Assist provides," Robb College Charity Officer Connie Campbell said. Throughout Project Week Robb College hosted a variety of fundraising functions each evening which included a waxing competition, eating competition and obstacle course.

Students also produced a tasteful nude calendar which sparked much media attention in local, Sydney and interstate newspapers, touching on the work of Can Assist and what the college was doing to raise funds and awareness.

The Armidale students, who are studying agriculture or business at the university, were photographed mustering cattle, in sheep pens, dairy sheds and even in a tractor bucket. The calendars were sold for \$25, and were a huge fundraising success.

Connie said that it was very important for the students at Robb College to get involved with their community and give back through fundraising. "Robb College is an agricultural college and Can Assist is an organisation that we really want to show we care about because we are the future of regional and rural Australia," Connie said. "It could easily be one of us down the track that needs the support of Can Assist."

In September, Richard Appleby attended the final 2013 formal dinner at Robb College, where he briefly spoke to the students and academics on Can Assist's mission and vision. He was presented with a cheque for \$20,240.00. "Coming from country areas they understand the issues faced by cancer patients in regional areas", Richard said.

A huge thanks to all at Robb College who made the fundraisers throughout the year a fantastic success!



Left: Robb College students wearing pyjamas during project week.

Right: Connie Campbell presents Richard Appleby with a cheque from their fundraising efforts.

Sources:

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/frisky-farmers-as-mother-nature-made-them/story-fni0cx12-1226700929484>

<http://armidale.starcommunity.com.au/top-stories/2013-07-11/pjama-kids-can-help/>

Your View

Parkes Garage Sales

Can Assist Parkes branch was thrilled with the response from local residents in donating items for their October garage sale. The call went out and volunteers were inundated with gear which went on sale at the Parkes Showground. All manner of items were provided and people picked up lots of bargains.

Very successful garage sales were also held by the branch in March and April this year. More than \$10,000 was raised in March and April at the garage sales and it is hoped the latest ones will raise more funds. The small group of Can Assist volunteers who organised the garage sales worked extremely hard to ensure a successful day.

- *Parkes Champion Post*

Gunnedah Fundraisers

The Gunnedah branch of Can Assist has been busy fundraising, recently holding a garden party and children's fashion parade in the beautiful garden of Dick and Polly Cameron on Saturday 28th September. It was a very successful day.

We were also recently the recipients of funds from the Ford Go Further 4UR Community programme, run by the local Gunnedah dealership, Taylor Ford. Each driver had a choice of 5 brand new Ford vehicles to drive, and each test drive raised \$40. We had to find 50 drivers to raise \$2000, and we attained that goal, plus 25 more, resulting in us being given a further \$1000! It was a great day.

- *Leigh MacPherson, Can Assist Gunnedah*

Jugiong "CCC" event a huge success

Jugiong has raised the bar yet again at their fundraising trivia night where 300 people packed the Jugiong Memorial Hall in order to raise funds for the "Cure for Life" Brain Cancer Foundation and local Can Assist branches in Harden and Gundagai after their friend and long time local Craig Coggan was diagnosed with a Brain Tumour in January this year.

The organisers were overwhelmed with the generosity of everyone who contributed and they can't thank them enough for their support. A total of \$34,000 was raised on the night – a staggering amount for such a small community. Gundagai and Harden Can Assist branches were each presented with a cheque for \$8,500, whilst the other half of \$17,000 was presented to Cure for Life foundation. This is a true testimony to the hard work by everyone, generosity and wonderful local community spirit which spread far and wide.

The committee were again very grateful for everyone who helped to raise these funds to assist these worthwhile organisations to continue the amazing work they do to help people suffering from cancer.

- *Harden Murrumburrah Express*
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Gallery



Above left: Award recipient, Pat Bailey, with family and friends after the presentation. Photos: Roel ten Cate
 Above right: Pat Bailey received her NSW Community Service Award from local state MP, Troy Grant (left) and Parkes Mayor, Ken Keith.



Parkes locals picking up bargains at the recent garage sale.



Left: Can Assist Gunnedah member Marge Clift preparing for her test drive at the Ford Go Further 4UR Community programme.
 Right: Progressive total leader board at Gunnedah.

Jenny Polimeni (CCC Committee), Monica O'Connor, Carol Barker (Can Assist Harden-Murrumburrah) Anne Tickner & Anne Sanderson (Can Assist Gundagai) and Paula Butt (CCC Committee).

