

BranchingOut



A Word from

Issue 6, August 2014

Matthew Geracitano, General Manager

It was truly a wonderful to meet so many dedicated members at the Branch Consultation on the 14th of June and I certainly look forward to meeting many more of you over the coming months. The branch consultation was a great opportunity to look at new strategies and ideas to move forward and plan the future at Can Assist together. I for one am certainly looking forward to working together, towards a better Can Assist, with a strong refocus on the branches and county cancer patients.

The most encouraging aspect of Can Assist moving forward into the future is the fact that there will be opportunities. Opportunities to work together, opportunities to be a cohesive Can Assist that will see Sydney office and the branches pulling along in the same direction.

One of the most important messages that I would like to think came out of the consultation was that while there are many branches and the Sydney office, we are not separate entities. We are one Can Assist, with one constitution, one authority to fundraise and with one common goal. We all need to work together, work consistently and be supportive of each other. Working collaboratively is most important; particularly as the Sydney office will be a much smaller team of staff so we will need your support to ensure that we can then best support you.

It has been a busy time for Can Assist since the consultation on the 14th of June. I am pleased to advise that the team in the Sydney Office have been busily working on implementing a number of the key suggestions that were discussed and highlighted at the branch consultation.

The 5 strategies for the board, management and branches to focus on are:

1. Promotion & Advertising of Can Assist and Its programs (Marketing & Branding).
2. Clear & Relevant operational advice for branches, maximise branch efficiency and reduce red tape (Operations and Compliance).
3. Accommodation and Transport Information (Function).
4. Wider range of support for patients.
5. Establish unity and collaboration between branches.

My short time at Can Assist has been enjoyable and very interesting, perhaps most interesting has been listening to members tell the stories for their region and what Can Assist means to them and to their communities. I am very much looking forward to the opportunity of working with each and every one of you to help ensure a cohesive, unified and effective Can Assist.

Can Assist Administration Update

Annual Branch Meetings (ABM)

It is that time of year again and ABMs are being scheduled and held. As you know, ABMs are an opportunity for each branch to elect office bearers and review the year's successes. Whilst they are not a legal requirement, they are necessary and we ask that all ABMs be held prior to the **Thursday 31st August 2014**.

Membership

The membership year runs from the 1st August to the 31st July each year. Updated member lists following renewals and resignations are to be sent to the Sydney office by close of business **Friday 5th September 2014**.

Can Assist Website – Branch Login Section

The Branch Login section of the website is a great resource for you to use. To access it you will need to scroll to the bottom of the home page and click on Branch Login. If you don't already know your branch username and password, please contact the Sydney office.

Keeping Safe

As most of you know the WHS Training tool is now available online and accessible through the Branch Login section of the Can Assist website. Through the training link you can view Can Assist's training slides, quiz and documents relating to WHS. The training slides can be read online or downloaded and printed and the quiz is set out in a user friendly multiple choice format.

Keeping Safe hint

To comply with our Keeping Safe Guidelines and legislation please ensure that at least one member of your branch completes WHS training annually.

Keeping Safe tip

Bullying is repeated and unreasonable behavior directed towards an individual or group that creates a risk to health and safety. It can occur in any organisation, at any level. Some examples of bullying behavior are; offensive language or comments, unjustified criticism or deliberately excluding someone. We can eliminate bullying by being respectful, tolerant of differences, encouraging and inclusive of those we meet and work with.

Finance Update

Audit

The finance team wish to thank all Branches for their assistance and cooperation during the 2013/2014 audit. By receiving your financial data, bank authorisations and/or local auditor details on time you have enabled us to prepare for the auditors arrival and facilitated the prompt resolution of their queries.

As the audit is still in progress we continue to ask for your assistance especially in instances where the auditor has selected your transactions for detailed testing. The audit field work should be complete by Friday 22nd August at which time we will return your current deposit & receipt books and cheque books. Again we thank you for your ongoing cooperation during this busy audit period.

Annual Report

Once the audit is complete we will be turning our attention to the preparation of the Annual Report. As requested in previous years we would ask you to provide us with the names of all individuals or organisations which have donated \$1,000 or more to your branch during the financial year (1st August 2013 – 30th June 2014). By providing this information you will ensure each donor is named in the annual report.

FaHCSIA 2013

We would like to take this opportunity to remind the Branches in receipt of FaHCSIA 2013 funding the deadline to spend their allotted amounts is Tuesday, 30th September 2014. We thank those Branches that have already spent and submitted their receipts. If your Branch has purchased the preapproved items please submit all receipts to Sydney as soon as possible so we can process your refunds. If your Branch is yet to spend the funds please remember purchases must be made on or before the 30th September otherwise, the funding will be lost. This deadline has been set by FaHCSIA. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Jessica, Natasha or Eilish for assistance.

Focus On: Approaching your local MP

At the June 14th workshop one of the 5 key areas members agreed on was the need for a greater focus on the promotion and advertising of Can Assist. While we will be implementing new and exciting strategies in the coming months, for now, we thought we could start with the basics of promotion – letter writing.

Writing to your local MP, state or federal government is a fantastic way of raising awareness of Can Assist's mission and vision within your community. As they are representing you, a politician should always be aware of the things their constituents are passionate about, specifically the financial inequities country people from NSW face when diagnosed with cancer.

As members and volunteers at the coalface of this organisation, your words are the most powerful tool we have to promote Can Assist and our vision.

Tips for Writing Letters

- **Include your name and address:** Identify yourself as a constituent by including your address. Generally, politicians are more likely to pay the most attention to people who live in their electoral district.
- **Know exactly who and where you are sending your mail to:** the state and federal parliament house websites have comprehensive guides on where to send your letter and how to address your letter so it gets to your intended recipient. For state MPs go [here](#) and for Federal go [here](#).
- **State the topic and keep it brief:** Include a subject line at the beginning of your letter. Letters should be no longer than one page and should be about one issue or request only. Start your letter with: "I am writing to urge your support for / opposition to..." or "I am writing to ask you to support / oppose ...". If you are asking them to come to one of your events be clear, tell them why it is vital that they attend. Provide specific details of your event so they can easily put it in their calendar.
- **Focus on three important points:** Choose the three points that are most likely to be persuasive in gaining support for your position and flesh them out. This is more effective than attempting to address numerous points in a letter.
- **Handwrite, or type and sign, your letter:** Some politicians regard handwritten letters more highly than typewritten ones.
- **Personalise your letter:** When possible, include a personal story and/or information on how the issue affects you, your family, your business, or people around you. This can help your representative understand your position and can be very persuasive as he/she forms a position on an issue. The more personal your letter, the more impact it is likely to have.
- **Thanks are as important as criticism:** Write thank you letters to politicians/parties that you know support your position. This will encourage them to stand firm on their position rather than backing down.

Please ensure that a copy of anything sent out on behalf of Can Assist to MPs is also sent to the Sydney Office. This is to ensure that if necessary, we can quickly and efficiently verify your correspondence.

These tips were sourced from the Electronic frontiers Australia guide on "how to get a politician's attention". To read more go to, <https://www.efa.org.au/Campaigns/lobby.html#tipsletter>.

Profile

Garry May - One person can make a difference!

Garry May is one remarkable man, a well respected community member and a family man who puts others before himself. Over the last eight years through his fundraising activities Garry has raised an incredible \$67,000 for the Can Assist Hay Branch.

Holding his first head shave for the Can Assist Hay branch back in 2006, he followed up with a second in 2011. For this year's head shave Garry set a minimum target of \$12,862.00 to be raised, with the aim of fundraising a combined total of \$50,000 for his three head shaves. Thanks to the generosity of the people of Hay, Garry blew that figure out of the water, raising in excess of \$29,500.00.

Understanding that fundraising isn't just about turning up on the day, Garry put in a lot of hard work prior to the big day to make it such a huge success. He sent letters out to local businesses and individuals asking for sponsorship and organized a couple of bowls days and sausage sizzles.

What started as a head shave quickly turned into a full shave off with Garry agreeing, for a price, to shave off not only the hair on his head but his beard and eyebrows too! So when the hat got passed around the people of Hay paid \$410 for Garry's beard and \$505 for his eyebrows.

While we didn't expect Garry to lose so much of himself for the Can Assist cause, we couldn't be more grateful to him.



Above left: Wayne & Kim Wooding with Garry May. Above right: Garry gets his hair cut by Wayne and Jodi.

Below: Can Assist Hay with Garry and his family.



Below: The new look – Garry and Jodi.



Your View

Blue Mountains Donation

Artist Gerlinde Thomas donated money from her latest exhibition at Katoomba's Lost Bear Gallery to the Blue Mountains Branch. "I am very happy to be able to make a donation towards this most active and practical service that has been supporting people with cancer in the Blue Mountains region for many years," said Ms Thomas as she presented the cheque. "I'd also like to thank all those who contributed to this donation through the purchase of portraits".

- *Blue Mountains Gazette*

Variety Night!

Can Assist Blayney and Can Assist Orange joined forces to present a very successful Variety Concert. In spite of the winter weather, 300 people packed the community centre to enjoy an evening of amazing talent.

- *Blayney Chronicle*

Soup & Damper

The weather was perfect for the guests that attended Can Assist Glen Innes' Soup and Damper lunch at the Let's Grow Railway Nursery. Local musician Jason de Cleene provided entertainment while gardening guru Jenny Rogers shared her expertise on roses and rhododendrons.

- *Glen Innes Examiner*

Dad's Army

Four brave Bermagui Dad's Army golfers went under the skilful hand of Dawn Kenyon when they lost their locks and beards recently in a shave to raise money for Can Assist Bega Valley. A total of \$1183.50 was donated by Dad's Army with Mr Blair donating a personal amount of \$328.15 making a grand total of \$1511.65. Can Assist thanked Dad's Army, who have donated regularly to the cause and assured every member that the money would be put to good use.

- *Bega District News*
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Left: Paul Eastment receives a cheque from artist Gerlinde Thomas. (Image courtesy of the Blue Mountains Gazette.)

Below: Ladies enjoying the Variety Night put on by the Can Assist Blayney and Can Assist Orange Branches. (Image courtesy of the Blayney Chronicle.)



Below: Leanne Bush and Carlene Knight serve soup, while Fay Burgess sells raffle tickets at the Can Assist Glen Innes Soup & Damper lunch. (Images courtesy of the Glen Innes Examiner.)



Left: Dad's Army with Rhonda Van Bracht and Peter Van Bracht from Can Assist Bega Valley.

(Image courtesy of Bega District News.)