

A Word from

Issue 7, February 2015

Matthew Geracitano, General Manager

In line with Can Assist's new strategic direction we thought it would be useful to meet with the Branches to see how things are progressing in each of the branch areas.

Late last year we visited the Bathurst and Southern Highland branches and have followed those visits earlier this year meeting with both the Oberon and Blue Mountains branches.

In March we have planned to visit the Riverina and will be meeting with the Lockhart, Leeton, Narrandera, Coleambally, Griffith, Hillston, Hay and Balranald.

We have had extremely positive feedback at this point in time from those branches that we have visited and from those that we have scheduled to meet. We at Sydney office are very excited to be visiting branches in their own community.

These meetings have allowed us to gather feedback regarding the new direction of Can Assist, the change to accommodation and the need for branches to now coordinate this. We have also welcomed feedback on areas that the branches feel they could be better supported by Sydney office.

These face to face meetings have also been beneficial as it has provided a wonderful opportunity to discuss and provide insight on reporting areas such as event notifications, WHS and financial reporting.

Further branch visits will be held throughout the year and it is our plan to visit each of the 51 branches.

We look forward to seeing you in your community soon!

Keeping Safe

Many Branches have now made use of our online WHS Training Tool, in order to ensure their Branch is covering it's legal responsibilities by having at least one Branch member trained annually. The Training Tool can be accessed in the Branch Login section of the website, where you can read online or download and print the slides, depending on your preference.

Keeping Safe hint

If your Branch meetings are not in a commercially managed venue (such as an RSL or Leagues Club) you need to complete the *Regular Branch Meeting Place Checklist* quarterly, rather than annually.

Remember, not all areas on the checklist will be relevant, so only fill in the sections relevant to your branch.

Keeping Safe tip

Make sure you ask for help from other members & volunteers whenever trying to move or carry heavy items. Remember, many hands make heavy items light work!

Can Assist Sydney Office Update

Sydney Staffing

With such a lot of change in the past 12 months, we thought it would be good to give everyone a brief update on Sydney's staffing contacts, who to contact for what and who will be on the other end of an email or phone!



Sydney Office Team

From left: Natasha Khushalani, Audrey Pritchard, Matthew Geracitano, Johan Gibson, Julia Grove, Gina d'Albora

Sydney Contacts

Matthew Geracitano - Matthew@canassist.com.au - our dynamic '*General Manager*' who oversees all things Can Assist.

Julia Grove - Julia@canassist.com.au - our wonderful '*Marketing & Communications Coordinator*' who looks after all things marketing, media, social media and website related.

Johan Gibson - Reception@canassist.com.au - Johan has stayed on in the role of '*Administration Assistant*', following the completion of the Sydney Accommodation Service. He now looks after reception and administration support.

Gina d'Albora - Branches@canassist.com.au - our knowledgeable '*Branch & Community Development Coordinator*' and looks after all things branch related, including memberships, events, branch support and merchandise.

Audrey Pritchard - Audrey@canassist.com.au - our brilliant '*Finance Manager*' who looks after all things finance related.

Natasha Khushalani - Natasha@canassist.com.au - our fantastic part time '*Bookkeeper*' who assists with all things branch financial.

Sydney Office Move

As you may all know, we have had some hiccups in our office moving plans, which were due to unfold in December 2014. At this point, we are in a temporary office space in Sydney's CBD until we confirm a permanent space, which we will update you on as soon as possible.

In the meantime, please continue to use our previous address & phone details, which Australia Post & Telstra have diverted to our current space.

Address: Suite 1, 35-39 Mountain St, Ultimo 2007
Phone: 02 8217 3400

Can Assist Finance Update

Firstly, I would like to thank those branches who are currently sending Sydney Office their monthly financial records on a timely basis. I know it is a lot of work for all you wonderful volunteers but monthly branch reporting is the key to good governance and a successful, sustainable organisation with a good reputation.

Currently we have received monthly financial records from 50% of the branches, and only a few branches have submitted all their financials up to December 2014.

In order to streamline our process and ensure that we are all working towards the same timeframes, we will be advising and communicating the timeframes regarding the submission of accounts and audit timelines in the next month. You will also be asked to confirm whether you want to engage a local auditor by 30 April 2015. This is to assist in our office planning and audit planning, and to assist our auditor to provide a quote for the audit of branches.

Unfortunately, last year the audit process was longer than anticipated and took about six months to finalise. This occurred for a number of reasons including the late provision, or non-provision, of information from some branches. This increases the risk of the audit, meaning more testing has to be undertaken at more cost. We hope that this year we will be able to assist each other in getting all the relevant information together so that the audit process can be a seamless and more timely one.

Please contact me if you need assistance with the monthly branch reporting or if you have any questions regarding the above.

Thank you all for your valuable contributions in your community.

Kind Regards
Audrey

Can Assist Administration Update

Branch Email Addresses

Many thanks to all those Branches who have established their Branch email address – there are now 41 out of the total of 51 Branches using a Can Assist Branch email address, which will support a more professional image for clients and help ensure continuity in communication through any changes in the executive committee.

If you haven't yet set up your account, or are having any challenges in using the account, please let Gina d'Albora (Branch Coordinator) know and she will be happy to troubleshoot with you.

Merchandise

Remember there is still Can Assist merchandise available from Sydney Office, as long as stock lasts. You can access the full pricing and ordering form in the Branch Login section of the Can Assist website.

Can Assist – Updated Look!

As you may be aware, Sydney Office has been busily working on a variety of measures to update Can Assist's 'look', following Branch feedback at the June 2014 Consultation. One of the 5 key strategies agreed on by the members was the need for a greater focus on 'Promotion and Advertising of Can Assist (Marketing & Branding)'.

To this end, some of the new & exciting strategies we have been working on are as follows:

New Website

The official launch date of 24th October 2014 showed a new and refreshed Can Assist website!

With brighter colours, easier to use navigation and more up to date images, the website embodies the modern day Can Assist.

While the website acts as a source of information for our clients and stakeholders, it is also a substantial resource for members and volunteers of Can Assist through the Branch Login portal.

We're keen to hear your feedback, so have a look and let Sydney Office know your thoughts!



New Brochure Development

As you are aware, new brochures have been under development since late last year. As agreed upon by members, the brochures will be customised for each Branch, who will have one page of unique content tailored to the services they provide. This will allow for individualisation, while still being able to keep the Can Assist brand consistent.

Sydney Office has now received 28 Branch descriptions, and has reviewed these in consultation with each of the Branches. There have been some delays with the design process from the external Graphic Designer doing the design work. The designs that were finally received by Sydney Office in early February were a little disappointing, and after a great deal of consideration, we have now sourced a broader variety of design options and hope to have a better quality design available for Branches in the near future.

We do apologise for the delay, and recognise that it is less than ideal for Branches to be without up-to-date brochures, however we felt it was better to wait a little longer and have a better quality product than to continue with a less inspiring design given the costs involved, and the length of time they will be used for.

If you haven't yet completed your Branch description and would like some assistance, please contact Sydney Office.

Branch Login Section

Along with the new website comes a new look for the Branch Login Section. This login section is a great resource for you to use, and where Sydney Office will be keeping all resources for Branches.



Doing this will allow for:

- Access to the most up-to-date forms (eg. Membership Applications, Stationary & Merchandise Order Form, etc.)
- Immediate access to resources you may need for fundraising events or financial assistance (eg. Public Liability Insurance, Event Notification Forms, Sydney Accommodation Guide, etc.)
- Reduced emailing of large documents & blocking Branch inboxes

To access this section, you will need to scroll to the bottom of the Can Assist homepage and click on Login, or alternatively go to <http://www.canassist.com.au/branch-login>. If you don't already know your branch username and password, please contact the Sydney Office.

Focus On: Sydney Accommodation

2015 marks a year of change for Can Assist as we end our two year long relationship with Quest and move forward with accommodation being supported and managed at the branch level.

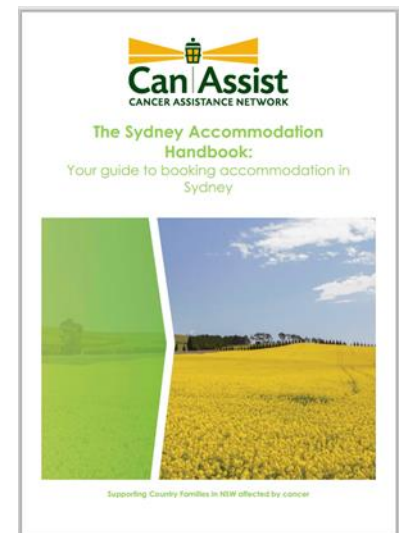
To assist with this process, you will now have received the *Sydney Accommodation Handbook* developed by Sydney Office. This is a resource that provides general tips and advice regarding the process of booking Sydney accommodation for clients, information on the areas surrounding Sydney's main hospitals and some guidance around the IPTAAS process. It is also available in the Branch Login section of the website.

With all requests now coming directly to the Branches, we know that many of you have been considering how you will respond to clients requesting assistance with accommodation stays. There are various ways that Branches may choose to extend support:

- Some branches may actively book and assist with accommodation on behalf on the client
- Other branches may wish to provide financial support towards costs (as a part of Financial Assistance)

Each branch will develop their own processes in implementing this change, to allow for procedures that work best for their particular community.

The *Sydney Accommodation Handbook* is an evolving document and we are always wanting to hear feedback or apply possible changes that you feel might be necessary, so please feel free to contact us at any stage.



In the News

Northparkes Mines – Volunteering for Can Assist

Last year, 20 Northparkes Mine employees volunteered their afternoon to help Can Assist Parkes' member and superstar fundraiser Ellie Hetherington with her community garden.

“For Northparkes Mines to organise and allow their workers to help such a worthy charity as Can Assist, one never knows who will be the next person that will need their help.



“Special thanks must go to Vic Moir for his wonderful donation and of course to all those Parkes residents who don't hesitate in not only donating plants and cuttings but are wonderful customers too.



“I call this my community garden in aid of Can Assist.” Ellie said it's not uncommon to come home to see a mass of plants in her yard.

“Most times I have no idea who has made the donation. But it shows just what a great and generous community we live in her in Parkes.”

Can Assist Parkes also showed their appreciation by providing them a delicious afternoon tea.

To read the full article, click [here](#).

Southern Highlands – Venice Carnivale Event

“MORE than 100 people attended CanAssist Southern Highlands' major fundraiser for the year, the Venice Carnivale.

“The event, held on November 20, proved a huge success raising a lot of money for the local cancer patients of the Southern Highlands...

“Professor Stephen Della Fiorentina gave the main address, and you could hear a pin drop as he explained why CanAssist is so important in our community, helping our cancer patients financially in their time of need...

“Many thanks also to Professor Desmond Freeman, Museum Designer and Artist who donated the magnificent picture of Venice that prompted the Carnivale. Desmond was the leader of the CanAssist fundraising committee and his tireless efforts and enthusiasm made it a night to remember for everyone.”



Virginia Hughes, Matthew Geracitano, Terry Hughes & Julia Grove at the event (Image from Southern Highlands News)

- Adapted from Southern Highland News (Bowral), 1 December 2014, p10

Farewell to Shirley Wood

1930-2014

Leeton Branch of Can Assist is mourning the death of Mrs Shirley Wood after a short illness.

Shirley was a founding member and long-time President of the branch. She attended a meeting of Soroptimists in 1982 where oncology nurse Annie Aichroy spoke about the importance of financial support to cancer sufferers. Shirley along with 12 other Leeton ladies formed the very first branch of Cancer Patients Assistance Society (later Can Assist) in Leeton at that meeting.

She was involved in fundraising thousands of dollars, public speaking and meetings on behalf of Can Assist. She stepped down from the role of president almost two years ago and at the time, said it was something she had loved doing.



“One of the highlights would be the fact we have been so successful in what we do for the community” Mrs Wood said. “We’ve given assistance to so many people and that is why you get involved in the first place – to help people.” Mrs Wood stayed on as publicity officer.

She was recognised for her 30 years of service to Can Assist in 2012 as well as being recognised as a Paul Harris Fellow the same year.

Her warmth and enthusiasm will be greatly missed by Leeton Branch. Our deepest sympathy goes to her daughters Jenny and Robyn and her extended family.



Australia Day Honors

Max Sward of **Can Assist Oberon** was awarded Citizen of the Year for 2015 for his contribution to the Oberon community.

President of the Oberon Branch, Max has worked for several years as the treasurer and promoting the branch's fundraising activities.

Max has also been a very active member of the Oberon RSL sub-branch for more than 10 years.



Can Assist Nyngan have received the award for 'Best Community Event'.

Well done to Anne Spicer, Angie White, Colleen Anderson, Lynn Webster, Bev Whiteford, Donna Pumpa and Tayla Martin.

Can Assist Blayney have also been presented with the 2015 Blayney Shire Australia Day Appreciation Award.

Betty McKenzie accepted the award on behalf of the branch.



If you know of other branches or individuals receiving awards, please let us know so we can celebrate with you.