

Kew Cottages Parents' Association Inc.

NEWSLETTER

- AUGUST 2008 -

*Representing
the concerns of
families of
Victorians with
profound and
severe
intellectual
disabilities
since 1957*

What is the future of the Association?

From the President:

For some years the Association has been exploring options for its future - particularly in the light of the ageing core membership and the eventual closure of Kew Cottages.

The strength of our Association has always been the people who have been willing to volunteer their time and energy to work on our behalf, whether as volunteers at fetes, Christmas Card sellers or Committee members.

In 2008 we are confronting the harsh reality that the base level of people able to contribute in this manner has decreased significantly.

While we have been fortunate to see an influx of siblings and younger members to the Committee these individuals are, for a range of reasons, not able to take on executive roles with the Committee.

Hence, we are heading towards the AGM with no nominees for the positions of Vice-President and Treasurer for the forthcoming year.

In addition, I would like to stand down as President at the AGM. If there is no other nomination for this position I am willing to nominate for one further term. This is, however, on the proviso that we receive a nomination from an individual willing to undertake the role of Vice-President in 2008/09 on the understanding they take over the role of President the following year.

In addition, our Executive Officer, **Louise Godwin**, has recently tendered her resignation – to take effect in October – so we are also confronting decisions regarding her replacement and possible restructuring of the role.

A letter was sent to members in early August detailing the above and outlining the Committee's proposed recommendations and requesting comment.

In addition, an extra general meeting will be held on **Sunday 24 August at 2pm** in the Meeting Room of the East Kew Uniting Church. The sole purpose is to discuss the options for the future. The comments and feedback received will contribute to the formulation of the resolutions to be voted on by the membership in attendance at the AGM on Sunday 28 September.

- Leo Waterfall

.. and the Vice-President:

I recently left my life in Western Victoria, and headed up to Melbourne to both visit my sister's new home on site at Kew and attend a pivotal General Meeting for the Association. On my trip back home, I had an opportunity to reflect on the familiar faces at the meeting and the great respect I have for their passion, energy and achievements.

But my mind soon wandered to my sister's lot in life - a new home in a prestigious suburb, improved staff/resident ratios and much talk of improved accessibility to relied-upon services - be they medical or day programs. Whilst I remain sceptical on this front, I do hope to be proved wrong by the state government.

I often think about my relationship with my sister. I feel that if she was blessed with a magical touch and freed of her disabilities she would ask me – "*Why have you devoted so much time to the Association and so little time to me?*"

It's a good question and not an easy

one to answer. What I do know is that she could have expected no more from my parents who have hung in there through the good times and not so good times at Kew – like so many other parents.

There are many reasons why siblings, relatives and friends of Kew Cottages residents have had a passive involvement to date. For me, I struggled to relate to a sister who could not communicate and I always wondered what was happening inside that physical shell in which she was trapped. I must say that the early days of visiting the big, noisy dormitories at Kew unnerved me a little as well.

I remain, however, optimistic that with our relatives now living in new houses, their relatives and friends will come forward and play their part as the passage of life renders primary family carers unable to maintain their lifelong role as advocate and support.

The Committee is a heartening example of this generational change, demonstrated through the involvement of siblings Clare, David and Michelle, and niece and nephew Catherine and James.

I encourage the vast number of our friends and members to talk with one of these committee members about taking a more active role. There is a great need at this time.

The Kew redevelopment/closure has presented us all with the improved household setting we aspired to for our relatives but it can only ever reach its true potential with families, friends and relatives of the residents playing an active role in their lives and working in partnership with DHS.

- Ian Whalley

KEW COTTAGES PARENTS' ASSOCIATION:

SUPPORTING CHOICE IN SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Nomination form on P3 ▶

From the membership

Dear Louise:

I have recently been involved in an excellent Community involvement project that I believe would interest you and many parents.

I am referring to a Community Residential Unit situated at No7 Princes Street Watsonia. This house has been extremely well designed and one of its features is that it has sliding doors along the eastern wall that allows direct access from the dining/living rooms of the house to a nice lawn and garden area.

All five of the men who live in this house are profoundly disabled; most of them are unable to walk so they spend time in wheelchairs. Most of them suffer from epilepsy. As things were it was dangerous to have them all outside in a shaded area at the same time because of the difficulty in negotiating corners if any of them had to be wheeled back into the house in the

event of a seizure. They all dislike wearing hats as sun protection and the staff is forever replacing headgear. All this has meant that on lovely sunny days it is extremely difficult to use these doors and take the men out to enjoy the day. This problem was discussed in the house and it was decided that a "sail" would give the men the protection that they need and on nice days much more time can be spent outdoors.

The Watsonia Branch of the Returned and Services League in conjunction with the Banyule City Council make funds available for worthwhile community activities. After going through the necessary DHS procedures an application was made and has now been approved for \$1735.00 from these funds for a "sail". The "sail" has now been provided and installed; it will be a great help to staff and it will enable the residents to enjoy more outside activities.

Bill Westgarth

Christmas Cards 2008

Christmas seems to come earlier each year.

This year's flyer, which includes the mail order form, is being sent in August, as there will not be a Newsletter in September. As usual, Mixed Packs will be on sale and some of the prices of our 2007 cards have been reduced. We will also be selling cards at the August, September and November KCPA meetings.

Just two new cards were ordered this year, due to the closing of the City Charity Christmas Shop at St Paul's. But there will be some of our selections at venues in Heidelberg, Mitcham, Mornington and at Camcare in Camberwell, with a small selection at the Mentone CAB, 36 Florence Street, Mentone.

If anyone has problems in obtaining any of our cards or needs a flyer, please ring Trish Waterfall (03) 9570 3195

We are hopeful of another successful year, as Christmas Card sales are an important fund-raiser for the KCPA.

- KCPA Christmas Card Committee - Trish Waterfall, Dorothy Hadwen and Astrid Judge

Obituary: Gary Carrick

The Association was saddened to learn that Gary, the much loved son of Judith, passed away in June.

Gary had only recently moved into his new house on-site at Kew, and leaves a devoted group of friends and carers who miss him greatly.

BITS 'N' PIECES

Our condolences and thoughts are with Judith and her family.

Welcome To Our New Booking Manager at Tootgarook

The Association is delighted that **Libby Renton** has accepted the position of Booking Manager from the beginning of August.

After a lengthy process of considering applicants, **Christine Hodge, Les Malseed** and the Tootgarook sub-committee offered the position to Libby.

Libby will be working alongside Christine for the next two months or so to familiarise herself with the operation of the house and requirements of the position.

Welcome Libby!

Diary Dates 2008

General meetings.
Everyone welcome!
All 2pm-4pm

Venue for all meetings:

**East Kew Uniting Church
142 Normanby Road
EAST KEW**

➤ **SUNDAY, 24 AUGUST**

➤ **Sunday, 28 September
(also AGM)**

➤ **Sunday, 23 November**



Dusink's musings

For some time now in this newsletter I have been musing. Now however, it is your turn to muse*. To really muse about the future of the Association.

All KCPA members will have received the letter from our President explaining the problems we are facing.

Just think about it: without a President, Vice-President and Treasurer we no longer have an Association. Is that what you really want?

Don't we need some organization to work for and to promote the care, education and welfare of our intellectually-disabled children?

Have you talked to your children and asked the question: "Who will care for your brother or sister when I'm gone?"

So, put your thinking cap on and see what you or one of your children can do to continue the work of the Association and come along to the August meeting and help us to find the right solution.

Your musing friend,

John

*muse: think, ponder, consider, mull over, cogitate, deliberate, reflect on, chew over

jdusink@alphawave.com.au

In the May 2007 edition of the KCPA Newsletter I wrote about how KCPA members who have a family member relocated from Kew to a CRU felt about the dental care their family member was receiving.

The article promoted a lot of discussion at subsequent general meetings, with many members expressing confusion over how their relatives could access appropriate dental care. Happily, the article also attracted the attention of **Dr Maha Ghobrail** who is the Unit Head of the Special Needs Dentistry Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV).

In response to the article Leo Waterfall and I were invited to the

Jim Scully writes . . .

Dental Hospital on June 20. We came armed with a long list of questions. Dr Ghobrail was very generous with her time in answering each one.

One of the areas of concern for KCPA members is the perceived delay in accessing dental care when it was decided that a general anaesthetic (GA) would be required. Some members were frustrated that their relative had been taken to the dental hospital only to be sent home the same day without the procedure being completed because it was

decided that a GA would be required. Members questioned why this should occur if the patient's history suggested that a GA would most probably be required. Couldn't arrangements to administer a GA be made prior to the initial visit?

Dr Ghobrail explained that an assessment regarding the need to use a GA is made for every procedure, regardless of whether the patient required a GA at a previous procedure. Both the dentist and anaesthetist are involved in this assessment, with the dentist deciding whether the procedure requires a GA and the anaesthetist

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KCPA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA (including September General Meeting)

Date: Sunday 28 September 2008
Time: 2pm
Venue: Meeting Room, East Kew Uniting Church,
 142 Normanby Road, East Kew.

(Note: Parking is available on Normanby Road, or in the car park at the rear of the church, entered from Woodlands Avenue through laneway).

Agenda:

1. President's Report
2. Resolutions regarding Future of the Association
3. Election of Association Office bearers

All positions on the Committee of Management become vacant at each Annual General Meeting. Nominations are sought therefore for the following:

- ◆ President
- ◆ Vice-President
- ◆ Treasurer
- ◆ Secretary
- ◆ Ordinary Member (up to 8 in total)

Nominations must be lodged before the start of the meeting. Please use the Nomination Form below.

Afternoon Tea will conclude proceedings.

Kew Cottages Parents' Association Inc

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT 2008-2009 - NOMINATION FORM

We, , and
 (Name) (Name)

members of the Association, nominate
 (Name)

for the position of

..... / /2008 .
 (Signature of proposer)

..... / /2008
 (Signature of seconder)

I hereby consent to the nomination / /2008
 (Signature of Nominee)

