



# Spring Newsletter 2011

## From the President

*Dr. John Hetherington*

In our last Newsletter (Winter 2011) I wrote about some of the activities of our volunteer groups and of the contributions of others in the community to bestow benefits upon our service. The financial contributions derived from all these efforts are an essential addition to the funding we receive from government. Palliative Care is a component of "Medicare". Medicare is funded by the Commonwealth Government.

Every three years the Commonwealth and State Governments review their "Agreement". Once the Victorian Government knows what its share is of the Medicare funds it can allot dollars to the various streams of health care for which it is responsible. In years gone by the Commonwealth Government had a direct say in the funding of Palliative Care but whoever held the purse strings, our problem was that Palliative Care was a Cinderella of health care – recognized around midnight but ignored for most of the day! Fortunately the value of Palliative Care is being increasingly recognized for its humanitarian benefits and this increased recognition is pushing Palliative Care into the mainstream – where

it really belongs. The sun that is beginning to shine upon Palliative Care in general is also shining upon domiciliary or home-based Palliative Care, which is our reason for existence. It is kinder to enable death to occur at home, if that is what the patient and family wish, than for the patient to have to be admitted to an institution in order to obtain adequate care.

Not only is it kinder but it is cheaper. At last governments are beginning to realize these facts and now, in Victoria, we are seeing an increased awareness matched by an increase in funding. Last month the "Strengthening Palliative Care Policy 2011-2015" was launched by the Minister for Health and Ageing. Real new money is coming onto the system, some of it dedicated to specific services but much of it being available for use as determined by those "at the coal face".

It is not a perfect world so discussions are still underway as to how the new funds will be divided and distributed. But there really is new interest, new enthusiasm and new money so we look forward to continuing to provide the service we know our community wants, by combining government and voluntary funding. We know that this enables the total to be more valuable than the sum of the parts. Long may this continue!

## From the Executive Manager

*Carmel Smith*

The staff and volunteers at Hospice continue to meet the demands for our service with their usual enthusiasm and generosity. As end of life care becomes a focus for the federal and state governments with the Health Care Reform, it is recognized that there are many people who can benefit from palliative care at the end of their lives, not only cancer patients, which is traditionally where our main referrals have come from. We are receiving many referrals for patients who have non malignant conditions such as heart and lung disease, end stage renal disease and also patients with end stage dementia. These people may live in aged care facilities or in the community with their families.

The state government recognized this increased demand and also realized that specialist palliative care was under resourced, and have allocated increased funding to help improve this situation. Any additional funding that we receive will allow us to continue our work in supporting all who need it at the end of their lives.

We continue to play a role at a regional level on the Hume Region Consortium, where I am the current vice chair. It is important that we continue to strengthen our ties with the other services within the Hume Region especially within the West of Hume. Our staff have wonderful experience and expertise that they are able to pass onto and support the smaller specialist palliative care teams in West Hume, and we are also working to support these smaller services in maintaining and training their volunteers, who are an integral part of all our teams. We look forward to continuing to strengthen this collaboration across the region into the future for the benefit of patients and their families requiring the services of palliative care.

## Education Provision Continues to Grow

*Annette Ludmore*

The reputation of the quality education GVHCS continues to provide has resulted in increasing demands for education. Two full training days have again been held in Shepparton, Moira and Lower Hume covering the basics of the palliative approach of care through to Pharmacology in palliative care. These sessions have had maximum capacity, with a further palliative approach day being held in Shepparton next month to cater for the demand. Supporting our future nurses, Sonia & Annette now also provide all the palliative care training for Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE Enrolled nurses across Shepparton, Cobram and Seymour.

Locally we provide numerous short training sessions across all disciplines of healthcare.

The monthly education sessions at Goulburn Valley Health are well attended, and Carmel & Annette have supported both Medical undergraduate and intern training.

Finally, the Banksia Palliative Care Resource Nurse Course is in its fifth year, and participation continues to be highly sought after. The monthly Journal Club, facilitated by Dr Joseph Ding, continues to grow and is now accessed by specialist palliative care nurses as far afield as Mildura & Robinvale.

Planning for 2012 has already commenced, and GVHCS remains hopeful that funding will allow its education capacity to continue to grow.

# 2011 Fruitloop Report

*Sonia Strachan*  
- Fruit Loop Committee

Sunday the 18th September saw 290 cycling enthusiasts participate in the 11th annual fruitloop bike ride. Rides consisted of a 50km, 100km & 180km course. This year we were truly blessed with perfect riding conditions.

Saturday night prior to the ride, over 100 riders met at Friars Café for a sumptuous meal with plenty of 'carbs' to load up for the next day's riding.

The ride is supported by multiple businesses and in particular Malvern Star Avanti was our major sponsor again. They have supported this ride since inception and would have donated in excess of \$30,000 in products.



2011 Fruitloop Riders.

It never ceases to amaze me the amount of volunteers who role up each year to support us. Volunteers feed and water us, they offer mechanical support on the road, they drive tail and lead vehicles, they man the food stops out on the road, they provide first aid, they massage and they do all this with the greatest smiles. WE ARE TRULY GRATEFUL TO ALL OF THEM.

Final figures are still being put together but we are hoping to have raised in excess of \$28,000.

The ride committee, chaired once again by Trevor Morris (the inaugural founder of this ride in appreciation of the care delivered by hospice to his late father) was delighted with the money raised which helps hospice to continue to deliver 24/7 palliative care to the Shepparton region.

## National Palliative Care Conference

*7th September 2011*

I submit this report following our recent attendance at the 11th National Palliative Care Conference that was held in Cairns from the 31st August - 2nd September 2011.

800 people attended the conference. These were from many domains including nursing, allied health, medical & volunteers. The theme of the conference was "Diversity-strengthening quality care at the end of life". It was an opportunity for us to focus on how to enhance the delivery of palliative care in our diverse communities, altering anxieties about death with attitudes of support, acceptance and understanding.

The program over the conference was very extensive. There were multiple plenary and small group presentations. Some of the topics included clinical developments within Australia & Europe, health care of refugees, the involvement of rehabilitation for palliative patients, the workforce challenge in palliative care and the diversity of pain.

The conference enabled us to meet many new people, learn and exchange knowledge, renew friendships and provided ample opportunity to network with like minded health care professionals.

Throughout the conference the same message kept shining through. That palliative care is about

life and that to provide palliative care we need a very diverse community to achieve the most optimal care for our patients and their families.

A highlight of the conference was the networking opportunities and the positive remarks that we received about our service in Shepparton. We are certainly well known out in the palliative care 'world'. Speaking with other colleagues our service is so fortunate to have such amazing community support and engagement.

It is a pleasure to let people know that we are still very much around, and continuing to provide 24/7 care to all who need us. We still hold the reputation as having the highest rate of home deaths in the state and the majority of our patients die in their place of choice. We are only able to achieve this because of the diversity of the people involved in our service. From the staff, committee of management, patient volunteers, multiple fundraising groups, op shop and the list goes on....How proud we were to represent GV Hospice Care.

We return to work with a renewed energy and capacity to impart much information from this conference.

*Sonia Strachan, Carenel Smith*  
& *Bunty Gundry*

## Friends of Hospice

*Pat Gibson*

### CHRISTMAS CARDS:

Hospice Christmas Cards will be on sale at the Combined Charities' Christmas Card Shop located in Scots' Church Hall at the corner of Fryers and Corio Streets. (Enter by the Fryers Street door.) Friends of Hospice have a number of attractive cards; prices range from 25c to 40c. The shop opens on 10th October and closes on 16th December.

### COMMUNITY CRAFT MARKET:

Representatives of Hospice organisations combined to assist at the Riverside Community Craft Market at Riverside Plaza on Saturday, 27th August. Funds raised for Hospice from gold coin donations as well as the raffle, amounted to \$2,930.

### SPRING COACH TOUR:

At time of printing, the "Friends" are finalising arrangements for the Coach Tour to "BUNDOORA HOMESTEAD and VILLA ALBA" in Kew, on 13th October. Tickets are \$60.00.



*Celebrating 2011 Volunteer Week.*

## Co-ordinator of Volunteers Report

*Lanya Holt*

Our patient care volunteers do a wide range of activities in their volunteer role, but before they do that, they participate in a comprehensive training program. Anyone can be a volunteer but this type of volunteering certainly isn't for everyone, and the application process is very thorough to help ascertain suitability to the role.

There is a standard training program for Palliative Care Volunteers across Victoria which covers information about topics including; what palliative care is, what the volunteer's role is, diversity, spirituality, communication, loss and grief. Following training volunteers attend monthly meetings which include ongoing education.

Some of our current volunteers 'specialise' in a certain role; such as participating in the bereavement program group work (the walking group and craft group). Some are trained in 'memoir writing', others help out at public events where Hospice has a presence like the recent 'Funeral Expo'.

Family support is also a crucial part of what some of our volunteers do. All our patients and their carers are advised about our volunteer program on admission. When providing family support, the volunteer's role is in a nutshell to help make life a bit easier. They provide social and practical support and what this 'looks like' depends on the needs of each particular family.

It might be sitting with the ill person while their carer goes out, or if the patient is more active, doing a crossword together, going for a walk or to a café, looking at photos, for example. At times the volunteer provides social support for the carer, making a cuppa and sitting down for a chat.

Hospice is involved with families at a really difficult time in their lives and having a volunteer who listens and is present is often something that really makes a significant difference.

## Bereavement Report

*Julie Poon*

GV Hospice maintains that supporting the bereaved family and friends whose loved one has died is integral to the delivery of palliative care. The aim of this support is to foster a realistic and individual perspective on the grief experience.

Provision of information about grief helps to normalize the thoughts, feelings and reactions that may be experienced for many people. It is recognized that most grief issues are effectively managed within the family and friendship networks of the bereaved person; however, grief can be powerful and sometimes brings with it a sense of not having control.

Therefore a variety of support is required to meet the individual needs of family and friends. The following is currently offered:

- Mail-out of pamphlets and literature on grief process
- Access to bereavement counsellor at Hospice for individual and family counselling, and referral to other agencies as required
- Group programs offer participants with the opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences with others who are also grieving. Groups such as walking group, creating memories craft group, young bereaved partners and kids groups are held regularly or as needed
- Yearly service of remembrance

**If you require any further information please contact Julie at Hospice on 58 222530.**

- Regular contacts from nurses and volunteers who have been involved with the family



*Winter Walk Group*

## Hospice Opportunity Shop

*141 Fryers Street, Shepparton*

All donations are gratefully accepted and proceeds go directly back to service delivery.

Location of clothing donation bins:

- Fairleys IGA car park – Numurkah Road, Shepparton
- Pat & Tina's BP Service Station – Numurkah Road, Shepparton
- Fishers IGA rear car park – McLennan Street, Mooroopna
- Harvey Norman car park- Melbourne Road, Kialla
- Fisher IGA car park – Walsh Street, Tatura
- Shepparton Market Place car park – Benalla Road, Shepparton
- Fryers Street Shepparton – located at the front at the Hospice Opportunity Shop

**Hours of opening:**

Monday to Friday – 10.00 a.m. – 4.00p.m.

Saturday – 10.00 a.m. – 12 noon.

# Up and coming events

## Mooroopna Country Music Group fundraising upcoming events:

• **Sausage Sizzle** at Harvey Norman on Saturday, 22nd and Sunday, 23rd October  
Saturday – 9.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m.  
Sunday – 10.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m.

• **Garage Sale** on Saturday, 3rd December at 197 Echuca Road, Mooroopna from 7.30 a.m. – 2.00 p.m.

If you would like to donate goods for sale please contact:

Dawn Fitch – 5825 1555 or Margaret Mathieson – 5821 4426.

• **Dance Night** at the Royal Mail Hotel, Mooroopna from 7.00 – 10.30 p.m. each Thursday Night. Nifty Fifty and Raffle.

All proceeds from the above events are donated to Goulburn Valley Hospice Care Service.

## 2012 Goulburn Valley Hospice Car Rallye

will be held Saturday May 5th – Sunday, 6th May, 2012.

## Murray to Moynes Cycle Relay

will be held Saturday 31st March & Sunday 1st April, 2012.

## The Combined Charities' Christmas Card Shop located at Scots' Church Hall

Fryers St, Shepparton.

Opens on 10th October and closes on 16th December 2011.

# Photo Album



*Hospice Staff enjoying PCA Conference in Cairns*



*Committee of Management*



*Funeral Expo*



*Fruitloop 2011*



*2011 Fruitloop Pasta Night*



*Generous donation from NVAC Guild Inc.*

## The 23rd Annual General Meeting of The Goulburn Valley Hospice Care Service Inc.

Will be held at Hospice House  
102 Balaclava Road, Shepparton  
Wednesday, 2nd November, 2011  
5.30 p.m.

ALL WELCOME.

For more information and to

**R.S.V.P.**

**Telephone: Hospice House  
5822 0068**

## THE SERVICE IS GRATEFUL TO RECEIVE FUNDS FROM MANY COMMUNITY GROUPS

Collection tins for the Service are located at:

- Medicare Office, Shepparton
- Shepparton High School Canteen
- Archer Street Medical Clinic

