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Message from the Minister

Firstly I would like to wish Golden Years and readers all the best for the festive season and a safe and happy new year.

Summer is a time when many Victorians enjoy warm weather and outdoor activities. However, summer can also mean bushfires and high temperatures can negatively impact the health and wellbeing of the community, particularly older people and those with a disability or a pre-existing medical condition.

The Brumby Government has been working with local councils to develop and implement heatwave plans into existing municipal plans. A heat alert system has also been instituted to assist local councils and other key agencies to prepare for and respond to heatwaves at a local level. Organisations that provide aged care or disability direct care may have already been engaged in this process.

I would encourage you to consider how your organisation can assist in communicating with your clients and members who are at risk during a heatwave. Heat health information, including translations, is available at: http://www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/emergency_mgmnt/heat_stress.htm

The Brumby Government has also undertaken extensive planning and preparation for the upcoming fire season. We have prepared a publication Bushfire response: Clients and services policy 2009-10 to assist management and boards of organisations to prepare clients in our health and community services for the bushfires season. The material is being sent to all funded organisations and also available online at: www.health.vic.gov.au

The Country Fire Authority (CFA) will use the services of 31 CALD Community Spokespersons over the fire season, to deliver bushfire safety messages in different languages through radio interviews, and other community-based forums. The CFA has also updated and translated its Bushfire Survival Guide into 30 languages. This contains key bushfire safety information, as well as information about the new Fire Danger Ratings. This material is available at: www.cfa.vic.gov.au

Lastly I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the work underway in 2009 in developing the Home and Community Care (HACC) Diversity Planning Framework.

Following a recent evaluation of the HACC Cultural Planning Strategy, we recognised that the future direction of cultural planning is through a broader framework that encompasses the diversity of the Victorian community, and acknowledges that barriers to accessing services are experienced by many groups who are marginalised or disadvantaged.

I would like to thank the ECCV as a crucial partner in this work along with the Municipal Association of Victoria. Together we will continue to work to make services more accessible for diverse community groups.

Thank you and have a happy and safe festive season.

Hon Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Senior Victorians



Message from the Editor

Looking back over the past twelve months in 2009, Golden Years has covered a broad range of issues in ethnic aged care. Our feature themes included Dementia and Ageing; Elder Abuse Awareness and Ageing Well. This issue focuses on Supporting Ethnic Carers. We have been working closely with Carers Victoria and conducted a special aged care forum to explore the needs and challenges of ethnic family carers (page 7).

In October ECCV showcased our tripartite partnership with the Aged Care Branch of the Victoria Department of Health and the Municipal Association of Victoria at the 2009 FECCA (Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia) Conference in Shepparton (page 5). ECCV continues working closely with the Victorian Government as part of a diversity strategy to improve equity and access to culturally appropriate aged care services for multicultural seniors.

Community highlights in September and October were the launch of the ECCV history book, *Many Hopes, One Dream* and the Multicultural Concert of the 2009 Victorian Seniors Festival.

On behalf of our ECCV Aged Care Policy Committee and Chairperson Marion Lau OAM JP, we wish you a peaceful and happy festive season and best wishes for the coming year 2010.

Dr Irene A Bouzo, Editor



ECCV Annual General Meeting 2010 Office Bearers and Executive Members

Almost 80 members and stakeholders attended the ECCV Annual General Meeting on 24 November 2009. The Chairperson, Sam Afra JP gave a warm welcome speech. In his address the Director Ross Barnett highlighted the achievements of the ECCV in policy development; advocacy and partnerships for the year 2009 and emphasised the need to plan now to meet the challenges of the future.

It was an interesting evening for the Returning Officer, Alex Adrianopoulos who efficiently moved the meeting through the ballot voting process to ensure a smooth and transparent voting experience for members.

The new Executive will meet for the first time on 19 January 2010 and start the planning process to ensure the ECCV can meet the challenges of the coming years. We look forward to the continuing support of our members and encourage you to let us know about the issues that you want the ECCV to focus on.

Congratulations to the new and continuing office bearers:

Chairperson, Mr Sam Afra JP (re-elected)

Deputy Chairperson, Ms Marion Lau OAM JP • **Deputy Chairperson**, Mr Eddie Micallef (re-elected)

Secretary, Ms Bruna Pasqua (re-elected) • **Assistant Secretary**, Ms Wesa Chau

Treasurer, Mr René Sundermann (re-elected)

Executive Members

Mr Alexander Abramoff • Mr Haileluel Gebre-Selassie • Ms Eugenia Grammatikakis
Mr Gaetano Greco • Mr Douglas McLaughlin • Dr Apollo Nsubuga-Kyobe • Mr Stan Penca
Mr Morley Pereira • Mr Parsuram Sharma-Luitai • Mr Simon Tisher • Mr Nick Tupanceski



Many Hopes, One Dream – the Story of ECCV

35 years of Memories and Milestones

Parliamentarians and community leaders from past and present, and across the political aisle, paid tribute to Victoria’s migrant and multicultural communities on 23 September 2009 at a special dinner to celebrate the publication of a new book on the Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria (ECCV).

Former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, was the evening’s guest of honour and earned a standing ovation for his firm reaffirmation of the value of Australia’s migrant communities.



ECCV Chairperson Sam Afra

Mr Sam Afra, ECCV Chairperson, echoed Mr Fraser’s sentiments and was one of a number of speakers to praise the former Prime Minister for his long-time support for a more multicultural Australia.

Mr Afra also thanked the many individuals and groups who had helped ECCV carry

the issues of ethnic groups and cultural minorities to the highest echelons of power.

Almost 300 guests, federal and state members, local government and community representatives gathered at the Springvale Town Hall for a night of revelry and reminiscing to mark the launch of a brand new book: *Many Hopes, One Dream: The Story of the Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria*.

Based on the recollections of current and past ECCV staff, supporters and executive members, the book recounts the first 35 years of ECCV’s development from modest beginnings on 14 July 1974 to become a valued voice in the state’s social policy sphere.

The Hon James Merlino, Minister Assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs, officially launched the book, noting that the title *Many Hopes, One Dream* aptly summed up the aspirations of generations of migrants who had chosen to make Victoria their home, including his own family.

The Hon Lindsay Tanner, Federal Minister for Finance and Deregulation, described the ECCV as a vital agent of change in advancing the common ideal of an open society.

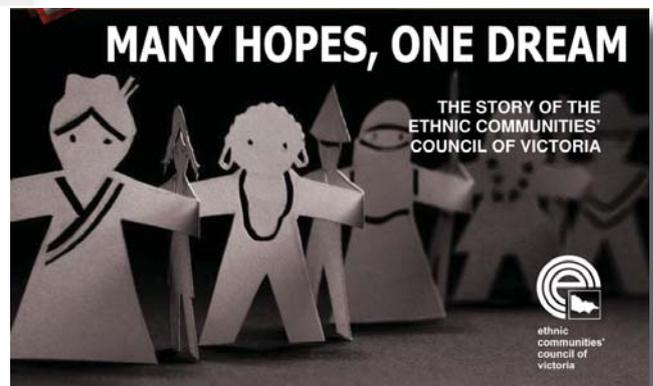
“In a robust democracy such as Australia, debate is a critical element. Not just selective debate that only welcomes some of the voices but debate that is open to all,” Mr Tanner said. “The ECCV has been pre-eminent in its role

in assisting multicultural communities in Victoria to actively participate in the debate occurring in our community.”

Lively performances by Chinese and Indian dancers and Sudanese songstress Ajak Kwai had the audience on their feet while a slideshow of ECCV moments gone-by fuelled a spirit of communal pride and nostalgia.



Indian Dancer



History Book—Many Hopes, One Dream: The Story of the Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria

Copies of *Many Hopes, One Dream: The Story of the Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria* can be reserved by contacting ECCV on 03) 9349 4122 or email: eccv@eccv.org.au.

The book is available at the recommended retail price of \$34.95.



Former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, ECCV Chairperson Sam Afra, ECCV Director Ross Barnett and ECCV Secretary Bruna Pasqua



A Victorian Tripartite Approach

ECCV presents at 2009 FECCA Conference



Marion Lau

“Navigating the maze of community aged care services can be very challenging for most people, and even more so for older people whose first language is not English,” said Ms Marion Lau OAM JP Executive Board Member of Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria. Ms Lau presented a paper, on 29 October, entitled A Victorian Tripartite Approach: Improving Access to Community Aged Care Services in the Multicultural Sector as part of the Health, Aged Care and Disability stream at the 2009 FECCA (Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia) Conference held at Shepparton.

The presentation showcased the tripartite collaboration over the past five years between ECCV, MAV (Municipal Association of Victoria) and the Aged Care Branch of the Victorian Department of Health (DH), to assist HACC (Health and Community Care) clients from non-English speaking backgrounds to access and negotiate HACC and other related services.

Ms Lau described how the developmental work done through the Culturally Equitable Gateways Strategy (CEGS) lead up to the establishment of the current Supported Access Pilot Project (SAPP) for seniors of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Marion Lau explained that ECCV and MAV, within the Department of Health HACC Diversity Reference Group, are providing sectoral leadership for eight pilots representing seven ethno-specific and one multicultural agency in geographically distinct areas which are:

Ms Lau described how the developmental work done through the Culturally Equitable Gateways Strategy (CEGS) lead up to the establishment of the current Supported Access Pilot Project (SAPP) for seniors of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Marion Lau explained that ECCV and MAV, within the Department of Health HACC Diversity Reference Group, are providing sectoral leadership for eight pilots representing seven ethno-specific and one multicultural agency in geographically distinct areas which are:

1. Co As It Italian Assistance Association (North & West Region)
2. Australian Greek Welfare Society (North & West Region)
3. Australian–Polish Community Services (North & West Region)
4. Macedonian Community Welfare Association (North & West Region)
5. Victorian Arabic Social Services (North & West)
6. Spectrum (formerly Northern MRC) (North & West Region)
7. Chinese Community Social Services Centre Inc (Eastern Region)
8. Fronditha Care (Southern Region)

The presenter highlighted areas for improvement as follows:

- Some culturally and linguistically diverse communities continue to underutilise HACC core services. Generally these are the more recently arrived migrants such as the Vietnamese and the Sudanese.
- Patterns of service utilisation by culturally diverse background seniors appear to fluctuate over different local government areas.
- Patterns of usage still fluctuate between service types, for example culturally diverse and non-English-speaking service usage is strong in social support activities and local government core services, with under utilisation in areas of allied health and district nursing.

Ms Lau concluded on an encouraging note that the well-established tripartite relationship between ECCV, MAV and the Aged Care Branch of the Department of Health and the eight pilot Supported Access Programs will continue to address areas for improvement to ensure equitable access to HACC services, for culturally and linguistically diverse communities, particularly those from non-English speaking backgrounds.



ECCV presentation at the FECCA Conference





2009 Victorian Seniors Festival Multicultural Concert

A Collaboration with ECCV

The Victorian Seniors Festival is now the largest and most significant annual festival for older Victorians.

The festival is funded by the State Government to thank, celebrate and recognise seniors for their ongoing contribution to our community.

It is an opportunity for seniors, their friends and family to participate in cultural, social, physical and intellectual pursuits across Melbourne and Victoria.

One of the many partnerships that has been established over the festival's 27 year history is the relationship with ECCV, Multicultural Arts Victoria and DPCDC (Department of Planning and Community Development)

Whilst each year's festival budget and overall program of events varies depending on the level of sponsorship obtained, a constant factor resulting from this partnership in recent years has been the commitment to the production of a free celebratory concert at the Melbourne Town Hall.

This is the Multicultural Concert, an event which features a selection of the best world music acts performing in Melbourne.

Initially conceived as an event for seniors from specific CALD backgrounds, the concert has become a popular event for a very diverse group of seniors. This year there was also a significant contingent of younger family members attending with their parents and grandparents.

The 2009 line up reflects the very healthy situation

with regard to Melbourne's musical talent and the growing interest amongst all ages in the world music phenomenon.

Although it is clear that seniors from a particular CALD heritage do love to see and hear performances of their own cultural heritage, it is equally apparent that they enjoy the exposure to music and performances from other cultures.

This year's concert saw performances from Marcello D'Amico & Anthea Sidiropoulos, the Many Moons Choir, Kinja, Kunataki, One Africa, the Gypsy Crims, Vardos and the Kavisha Mazella Trio.

ECCV, the Victorian Seniors Festival and Multicultural Arts Victoria work together to program the concert.

This involves discussion around the nature of the concert audience and the opportunities available to both celebrate individual cultures and the joy of living in a city rich in cultural diversity.

Ultimately the aim is to ensure that seniors have a wonderful time and enjoy a high standard of production and hospitality!

The festival manager Chris Reidy places a high priority on concert production values and the comments from seniors after this year's concert were extremely positive.

The festival also runs a free Festival Club at Melbourne Town Hall so that seniors were able to continue to enjoy entertainment and hospitality throughout festival week.

ECCV at Fabric of Society Launch Seniors embroider their immigrant heritage

ECCV Chairperson Mr Sam Afra attended the launch by the Hon James Merlino, the Minister Assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs of the remarkable community wall hanging Fabric of Society—The Templer Journey in Bayswater on 29th August 2009. Almost 200 onlookers at the ceremony, hosted by the Temple Society Australia, watched the spectacular unveiling of the giant wall-hanging that was embroidered by community members and five years in the making. "Many volunteers who worked on the project were German-speaking immigrants aged in their 70s and 80s," said Helga Jürgensen, Project Coordinator.

Dr Irene Bouzo, MC said, "The wall-hanging is an important heritage artwork because it represents the history of the Templers, the culturally diverse local history of Knox and the immigration history of Victoria."

Dr Rolf Beilharz, the President of the Temple Society explained that the textile masterpiece depicted the

journey of the German-speaking Templers across several centuries and through various countries, from Swabia in the Black Forest, Germany and Russia to Palestine, WWI internment in Egypt and WWII civilian internment in Tatura, Victoria, and then eventually to a large group settling in the outer south eastern suburbs of Melbourne for over half a century.

Minister Merlino said, "The Templers are a great example of a community that promotes harmony in multicultural Victoria." Councillor Adam Gill from the City of Knox launched the accompanying book Fabric of Society: The Templer Journey – An Embroidered History and said "The Knox Council proudly provided the funds for this project though its Community Development grant program."

[For further information or a private viewing contact the Temple Society Australia regional office ph (03) 9557 6713 email tsa@templesociety.org.au] *see photos inside cover



Report on Who Cares? Supporting Ethnic Family Carers

A joint ECCV/Carers Victoria aged care forum

“Family unpaid carers do 75% of the caring in the aged care community sector. Amongst them is a group of ethnic family carers that is often isolated, unrecognised and unacknowledged.” said Maria Bohan, CEO of Carers Victoria, the special guest speaker at the forum Who Cares? Supporting Ethnic Family Carers held at ECCV on 19 November. Marion Lau, Chairperson of the ECCV Aged Care Policy Committee welcomed about 70 participants.



Marion Lau and Maria Bohan

Best practice initiatives in supporting ethnic family carers across a wide range of programs were showcased on the following areas:

How can we provide best practice through improving our own systems?

- Connecting the Dots—Galina Kozoolin, South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre

How can we provide best practice support for ethnic carers in a rural setting?

- It’s just what you do – Supporting Carers in Gippsland —Lisa Sinha Gippsland Multicultural Services

How can we provide best practice support for ethnic carers in partnership with other providers?

- To Steki tis Haras—Creating Through Partnerships - Aliko Kyrkou, Fronditha Care and Melinda McCulloch, Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre Southern Region

In the second part of the forum participants hypothetically met in the Café for Carers to discuss questions that matter such as What do ethnic family carers really want? and What can we as aged care providers do to support them?

Evaluation surveys gave lots of positive comments about the day. The success of the forum is attributed to the extensive cooperation between ECCV and Carers Victoria.



Lisa Sinha, Galina Kozoolin, Aliko Kyrkou, Melinda McCulloch, Marion Lau, Maria Bohan



Marion Lau ECCV at Who Cares Forum



Participants at Who Cares Forum

For further information contact Irene Bouzo, Policy Officer Aged Care, Ethnic Communities’ Council of Victoria, email ibouzo@eccv.org.au



La Vita Bella – Make a Move

Home Based Exercise and Nutrition Program for Italian Speakers

Doutta Galla Community Health Service (DGCHS) in partnership with Moonee Valley Council (MVCC) is conducting “La Vita Bella” falls prevention and nutrition program as part of the Department of Human Services funded Make a Move program.

Older people who live at home, often alone, who don't take part in any physical activity and who have poor dietary health are at great risk of falls. Having a fall or having the fear of falling reduces confidence, may cause injury and hospitalisation and ultimately loss of independence.

The program was developed in mid 2008 in response to an identified need within the community, ie those elderly people who have had falls or who are at risk of falling, socially isolated and unable to access centre based services at DGCHS.

Initially the need appeared to be greatest among culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) elderly people, particularly elderly Italian speaking people living within the northern catchment of DGCHS. Although this group of people was initially targeted, the program is now open to anyone over the age of 75 years, living at home and not currently accessing other physical activity programs.

An initial home visit is conducted by a physiotherapist to assess the client's falls risk and suitability to the program. Following this assessment and discussion with the client, recommendations and referrals may be made to other services as necessary and an individual strength and balance program prescribed. While providing direct support to participants during the early part of the program, participants are encouraged to self manage their exercise program and to set their own goals.

Subsequent home visits (weekly in the first month) are made by a trained fitness instructor to encourage, progress and directly support the client with the strength, balance and nutrition program. Telephone calls to the client are made at monthly intervals for up to 12 months to continue to provide client support and motivation with exercise adherence.

Once enrolled in the program clients receive a “showbag” of information on falls prevention and community activities, as well as the Italian music and comedy CD – La Vita Bella, (produced through funding from MVCC). The La Vita Bella CD informs clients of falls risks and how to avoid them, as narrated in a very entertaining conversation between comedienne Carmelina and Edwina (The Signoras). It allows the listener to laugh at common fears

and beliefs about falling while providing some practical and supportive advice on how to improve confidence and well being. Between the tracks beautiful music is provided by the Italian Women's Choir (founded in 1996 by Kavisha Mazzella) – songs well recognised by the generation of listeners. It is hoped that this will provide some joy and motivation for people to continue the strength and balance exercises and with this to build confidence to achieve La Vita Bella – a beautiful life.

Carers and friends are actively encouraged to support ongoing exercise adherence and inclusion into community activity groups as improvements in strength and balance are made.

“La Vita Bella” program is free and people can self refer or be referred through a health provider. Contact central intake at DGCHS – Niddrie – 8378 3500, Moonee Ponds – 9377 7100, and Kensington – 8378 1600.



Italian music and comedy CD – La Vita Bella featuring comedienne Carmelina and Edwina (The Signoras)





Will the children be there to help us?

Australian Association of Gerontology 41st National Conference

Australian Association of Gerontology 41st National Conference was held on 18–21 November 2008 in Perth. Below are the presentations by our research team.

- Retail therapy: looking at access to shops through a food security lens—presented by Jane Sims, Harriet Radermacher, Susan Feldman
- Food for all—presented by Harriet Radermacher and Susan Feldman

Family was a key issue that older people talked about in a study conducted by a team of researchers at Monash and RMIT Universities, in conjunction with Melton Shire Council. The current climate of rapid and global social change may be jeopardising the supportive capacity of intergenerational networks, placing older people at greater risk of malnutrition and related diseases. In a study that sought to investigate the challenges and barriers that older people from different cultural backgrounds face in accessing nutritious food, the role of family emerged as very important.

Eighty one people (32 male and 49 female) aged between 56 and 94 years, living in the community in Melton Shire, completed a quantitative questionnaire and of these, 44 also participated in six focus group discussions (3 Anglo-Celtic, 1 Macedonian, 1 Serbian, and 1 Maltese). Participants were asked about where they shopped, how they got to the shops, and their experiences of preparing and eating their meals as they aged.

The researchers found that cost and financial considerations, health and physical capacity, transport, intrapersonal factors (such as lack of motivation), and lack of availability of preferred food all emerged as potential barriers to participants accessing nutritious food of their choice.

Anglo participants primarily shopped at the supermarket and local shops, and many used local government food-related services (eg community bus, community dining room, meals-on-wheels). In contrast Maltese, Serbian and Macedonian participants did not use local government services and accessed the majority of their food via their own informal fresh food networks. Accessing these networks often

involved travelling large distances, which required private transport. Growing their own food, as well as accessing meals provided by ethno-specific church-based groups, was also noted by Macedonian and Serbian participants to be a valuable source of food.

In addition, analysis of the data indicated to the research team that while the children of participants had supportive roles in their older parents' lives, participants were aware of the increasing pressures and responsibilities that their children faced. In particular, participants spoke about the decreased capacity of their children to assist their parents, as the following comment illustrates: "I've heard a lot of stories and spoken to a lot of people and when it comes to the crunch, you can't even rely on your kids. Because they've got their own families, they've got their own problems".

Overall, this study found that the changing circumstances that accompany growing older influenced this group's ability to independently shop for, prepare and eat affordable and nutritious food. The researchers concluded that appropriate and effective services that build on the strengths of existing informal food and family networks may be required to ensure that older people continue to access the food they want and need. Nutrition educators, in conjunction with local government service providers, have the opportunity to play a key role in building upon existing safety nets and innovative initiatives to ensure that older people now and in the future have access to adequate and appropriate food of their choice.

Dr Harriet Radermacher, Monash University

Dr Susan Feldman, Monash University

Professor Steve Bird, RMIT University

For more information about this study please contact: Dr Harriet Radermacher (03 9501 2435, harriet.radermacher@med.monash.edu.au) or Dr Susan Feldman (03 9501 2434, susan.feldman@med.monash.edu.au), Healthy Ageing Research Unit, Monash University.



MONASH University



This is an article written by a group of carers from Victoria who care for someone with multiple sclerosis (MS). MS is the most common disease of the central nervous system among young Australians. Common symptoms include loss of coordination, speech difficulties, blurred or double vision, numbness, heat intolerance and extreme fatigue. For some people living with MS, the support of a carer is essential for daily living. The group wanted to recognise and identify the need for all carers to acknowledge their feelings and emotions. Being part of a carers' group can help provide emotional support in addition to seeking professional advice and guidance from health professionals.

From a Carer's Perspective

Quite naturally most carers concentrate on the needs of the person they care for. Your needs are related to the person you care for, but are also different. It is vital that you look after yourself too!

Becoming a carer may be a slow and gradual transition or it may happen suddenly. If you have gradually taken on a caring role by doing a few extra tasks it may have taken a long time for you to become aware of the changes in your life and that you have actually become a carer. Caring can be rewarding, demanding and frustrating!

The range of feelings you might experience in the caring role is huge. All carers respond to the demands of caring in their own way. Feelings are always individual and everyone will react differently. You can feel sad, angry, upset, guilty, frightened, stressed, relieved, distraught, overwhelmed, confused or calm. Sometimes you will feel some of these emotions or you may feel all of them and more.

When faced with any changes you not only need to adapt practically, you also need to adapt emotionally.

Good health includes physical and emotional wellbeing, including the need for privacy, for personal space and time to socialise. As the saying goes, "prevention is better than cure", so by looking after yourself you will hopefully feel better and be more able to cope with your caring role. You must always be aware of your other roles in life such as being a partner, parent, friend or co-worker.

You also need to be listened to, understood, and not judged when talking about the difficult aspects of caring. Find someone you trust to confide in. This may be a friend, work colleague or someone from a carer support service. Make sure you seek professional help – MS Australia (www.mssociety.org.au) can provide you with appropriate information and advice.

Why doesn't anyone ask how I am?

One of the biggest mistakes made by carers is thinking that they can, and should, handle everything alone. It is easy to feel invisible. Everyone's attention goes to the person with MS and no one seems to understand what the carer is going through. Many carers say that people rarely ask how they are. Mental health experts say it's not wise to let feelings of neglect build up. Carers need to speak up and tell other people what they need and how they feel. Family and friends can be crucial members in a network of assistance but carers often report that it's hard to actually ask for their help. The first step is to tell friends and family that their help is needed, appreciated and welcomed. They may worry that offering help will seem intrusive, especially when it looks as if things are being handled well. Keep a list of projects, errands or services that friends or family could do.

Emotional stress can lead to behavioural responses such as:

- Over or under eating
- Excessive smoking
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Substance abuse
- Guilt—about neglecting their partner, their children and/or their employer
- Fatigue—coping with little or broken sleep
- Stress and anxiety—juggling the demands of caring and work
- Low self esteem—feeling that no one cares about them
- Isolation—not being able to attend social events
- Hurt - having to face insensitive remarks from people who do not understand
- Anger—the situation is unfair
- Abuse (physical and emotional)—frustration, harsh criticism or manipulative behaviour

Young carers

Caring at a young age can have a big impact and can affect all parts of a young person's life—school life, social life and family life. It can also affect how young carers feel about themselves. The impact of caring depends very much on each individual situation. For instance, a young carer struggling alone to carry out tasks greater than would be normally expected of a young person can go on to experience difficult physical and emotional issues.



Managing The Care – Emotions And Feelings *continued*

Finding appropriate support is extremely important.

Being part of a carers' group can provide emotional support and enable you to connect with others who can relate to your circumstances. Our carers' group is a vital part of our network of support!

*** This article has been written and compiled by a Victorian carers' group. It first appeared in the Winter 2008 edition of Intouch magazine – the official publication of MS Australia – ACT/NSW/VIC. For more information visit www.msociety.org.au**

MS Australia—ACT, NSW, VIC is a not-for-profit organisation that supports people with Multiple Sclerosis, their families, carers and friends MS Australia – ACT/NSW/VIC informs people on how best to achieve as full and healthy

a lifestyle as possible while managing the symptoms of MS, raises funds for the provision of services, programs and research, educates the community, and liaises with government and other bodies on MS-related issues.

If you have MS and would like information or support for yourself or a family member or friend, MS Australia can organise either home visits or information sessions with an interpreter at a time and place that suits both you and our service.

MS Australia provides printed information available in Greek, Italian, Spanish and Arabic.

Please call MS Connect on 1800 042 138 for more information, help or support.



Respite for Greek Speaking Carers

Dementia Care Project 2009



An initiative by the Department of Health, Aged Care Branch

This is a joint project; a partnership between Uniting Care Community Options (UCCO) and Fronditha Care funded by the Department of Health, Aged Care Branch. The aim of the group is to provide support and respite for carers of Greek speaking background in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR).

Carer Support Group – ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ ΠΑΡΕΑΣ

The Carer Support Group 'Greek Friends' operates through the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre (CRCC). The purpose of the group is for carers from Greek background caring for someone with dementia to meet once a month to talk, learn and discuss things related to dementia and their caring experience.

There is strong evidence that with each meeting, carers are becoming more comfortable and they are sharing their personal stories. The monthly meetings provide an opportunity to bond and socialize, something that some of them did not previously have in their lives.

The carers share stories about their caring role, exchange information and support each other. There is continuously growing trust and developing friendships between the carers.

If you are carer of a Greek background residing in the EMR and would like to be involved in the group or receive information please contact our staff at CRCC on 1800 059 059.

Host Home – ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΦΙΛΟΞΕΝΙΑΣ

The Host Home Program in the Eastern Region provides a day of leisure and social activities for a small group of Greek people who are experiencing early stages of dementia. The program operates weekly on a Thursday and takes place in the home of a qualified Greek speaking worker who is assisted by a support worker. The service provides a welcoming, comfortable and homely environment, a culturally relevant and sensitive activities program and occasional outings. The Host Home enables carers to have a regular, planned break and an opportunity to attend to other priorities including their own interests and wellbeing.

This is one of two Host Homes delivered by Fronditha, with the first being operational for over four years in the Southern Region and supported by the Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre in the Southern Region.

For further information about the Host Home Programs offered by Fronditha Care please phone Maria Atgiaras on (03) 9552 4111.



Feature Section – Supporting Ethnic Carers Improving Bladder and Bowel Control – Victorian Continenence Resource Centre for everyone

Continenence Awareness Week 2009

The Victorian Continenence Resource Centre (VCRC) marked the 2009 annual Continenence Awareness Week (2nd – 8th August), with a professional development forum for health and community service professionals. The forum was about providing better support to people caring for someone with incontinence. The forum was titled 'Behind Closed Doors' to acknowledge how the caring role and in particular the problem of incontinence is often managed out of sight, 'behind closed doors'.

What is incontinence?

Incontinence is experienced when there is a loss of control of the bladder or bowel causing leakage of urine or faeces.

Bladder and bowel control problems are common and can affect men and women of all ages. However these problems should not be accepted as a normal part of ageing.

Some of the factors that can place people at higher risk of experiencing bladder and bowel control problems include pregnancy, childbirth and menopause, obesity, prostate and neurological diseases, chronic disease and disability.

Stigma

There are high levels of underreporting of incontinence due to stigma and lack of discussion or acceptance of the issue as a common problem. Embarrassment and shame are also strong factors along with a false belief that incontinence is a normal part of ageing.

Incontinence is common in people

Little information about perceptions of incontinence among CALD communities is known. Research in the UK suggests that among ethnic minority groups incontinence symptoms are commonly normalised as part of ageing, or as a consequence of childbirth. Help seeking behaviour is also hindered due to feelings of embarrassment and lack of available information in culturally sensitive formats.

However, it is important to know that bladder and bowel control problems can be prevented, treated, better managed and cured at any age. People don't have to put up with it.

Information and Services Available

The National Continenence Helpline 1800 330 066 is a freecall service that is staffed by continence nurse advisors who can provide confidential advice to people

with bladder and bowel problems and their carers. The Helpline operates from 8.00am to 8.00pm (AEST) Monday to Friday. Interpreters can be arranged in other languages to help provide information, advice and referral to continence services for further assistance.

There are a number of public continence services available across metropolitan Melbourne and in regional Victoria. Continenence services are able to assess the problem and provide appropriate treatment and management.

Information and advice about continence products and suppliers is also available, as well as information about the funding assistance schemes to help people experiencing incontinence with the purchase of continence products, such as pads.

Information about incontinence is also available in other languages:

- 15 factsheets are available in 14 different languages
- order by phone from the National Continenence Helpline 1800 330 066
- order online from the CFA website www.continenence.org.au go to 'resources', then 'order free resources' then 'other languages'



Susan McCarthy, nurse continence advisor for the Victorian Continenence Resource Centre presenting at the 'Behind Closed Doors' forum in Continenence Awareness week.

- download and print factsheets in your language from the federal government bladder and bowel website www.bladderbowel.gov.au/publications/factsheets.htm
- 'Healthy Bladder and Bowel Habits' brochure is available in 9 languages to download from the VCRC website www.continenencevictoria.org.au go to 'resources'
- VCRC provides free educational talks to community groups with the aid of interpreters. Call (03) 9816 8266 to book a talk.

Further information about VCRC activities and events are available via free subscription to 'Contact', our quarterly e-newsletter. Email us at info@continenencevictoria.org.au to subscribe.

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