

Diary of events: May – August 2010

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 18 September, 2010 from 2 – 4.30pm at ARAFMI Tasmania Hobart office, 3 Bowen Road, Moonah. All are welcome.

Family/Carer Support Sessions – Launceston and Hobart

These peer support meetings, for the family and friends of people with mental illness, may include caring and supportive conversations, information sharing, skills development and guest speakers. Everyone is welcome.

Launceston

ARAFMI Tasmania office, 34 Howick Street, Launceston at 7.30pm on the 4th Monday of each month.

Meeting dates:

24 May; 28 June; 26 July; 23 August

Launceston Eating Disorders Support Group for Families, Friends and Carers

Meets every 2nd Thursday of the month at 4.30pm at ARAFMI Tasmania office, 34 Howick Street.

Hobart

ARAFMI Tasmania office, 3 Bowen Road, Moonah at 7.30pm on the 2nd Thursday of each month.

Meeting dates:

- 13 May Topic: Patient Medication Profiling
Guest speaker: Terry Burnett
- 10 June Guest speaker: Kerry Dessegna,
Southern Respite Co-ordinator,
Anglicare
- 8 July Guest Speaker: Rebecca Lamb,
Clinical Nurse Educator,
Wilfred Lopes Centre
- 12 August TBA

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Worth reading

Sickened: The true story of a lost childhood by Julie Gregory (2003)

This book is an excellent introduction to the mental health disorder, Munchausen by Proxy. Julie explains how her childhood is controlled by her mother in a harmful yet very emotionally bonded way. Isolated in a trailer van, she must survive and go along with her mother's loving manipulation. Many years later she finds the key to unlock the truth of why her life has been steered by constant hospital visits, medication and ultimately open heart surgery. This is a gripping, but challenging book.

Review by **Diane Hayes, ARAFMI Tasmania**

Hobart Family Information Session

Last of series of 3.

14 May 12.30-3.00pm at 3 Bowen Road, Moonah
Focus: Schizophrenia

Support for People with Mental Health Problems

Bipolar Peer Support Group

Meets at ARAFMI Tasmania office, 34 Howick Street Launceston at 1 – 3pm on the 4th Monday of every month:

Meeting dates:

24 May; 28 June; 26 July; 23 Aug

Thinking Well Depression Support Group

Meets fortnightly on Tuesdays at 7.30pm at the Emmanuel Centre, 123 Abbott Street, Newstead.

Meeting dates:

11 & 25 May; 8 & 22 June; 6 & 20 July; 3, 17 & 31 August

Regional Committee Meetings

Sub-committees in Hobart and Launceston oversee ARAFMI operations and programs in each region.

Northern Committee meets monthly at 4.30pm at ARAFMI Tasmania office, 34 Howick Street, Launceston.

Meeting dates:

17 May; 21 June; 19 July; 16 August; 20 September

Southern Committee meets at 6pm at ARAFMI Tasmania office, 3 Bowen Road, Moonah.

Meeting dates:

15 June and 10 August

Hurry Down Sunshine by Michael Greenberg (2009)

One summer evening, the author's daughter, Sally, is brought home by police after trying to stop the traffic in a New York street to talk to the drivers about her new insights into life and genius. Greenberg chronicles his daughter's illness vividly, but manages to maintain some objectivity and is never overwhelmed by the turbulent emotions he describes.

The book is an enlightening and articulate account of living with bi-polar disorder.

Review by **Kate Shipway, ARAFMI Tasmania**

ARAFMI Tasmania

An Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill

Launceston

34 Howick Street, Launceston 7250
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Fax: (03) 6334 8719
Email: north@arafmitas.org.au

Hobart

PO Box 717
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Ph: (03) 6228 7448
Fax: (03) 6228 7765
Email: south@arafmitas.org.au
Office open 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday
Helpline 10am – 10pm 7 days/week

Website: www.arafmitas.org.au

Executive 2009-2010

President	Kate Shipway
Vice President	Gary Kelly
Junior Vice President	Graham Booth
Treasurer	Karen Frost
Secretary	Anne Bevan

Membership Application

(Please cut out or copy)

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr: _____

First name: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Phone: _____

Mobile: _____

Email: _____

I enclose cheque/money order for \$5.00 as annual membership of ARAFMI (Tasmania) Inc. for the 2009 – 2010 financial year.

I am: (please circle)

A carer A student A professional

Other _____

I wish to receive: (please tick)

Newsletter

Promotional material about up coming events

I am happy to receive information by email

Yes No

Please send to:

David Barnes, Executive Officer
ARAFMI Tasmania
PO Box 717 Moonah TAS 7009



Schizophrenia Awareness Week

16 – 22 May 2010



ARAFMI Tasmania, in collaboration with *Aspire* and *Richmond Fellowship*, is pleased to invite you to attend one of the forums to be held in your region as part of Schizophrenia Awareness Week.

The keynote speaker at each forum will be renowned poet and author Sandy Jeffs.

Sandy's life and work are an inspiration. She is a gifted and entertaining speaker who will appeal to people living with mental illness, their carers and mental health professionals alike.

Other speakers at each forum will include a carer of a person with schizophrenia and local health professionals.

Who is invited?

Families and friends of people with schizophrenia, consumers, service providers, mental health practitioners, GPs and the general public are all welcome.

Come along and be inspired by our guest speaker (read Sandy's profile on this page). You will find out about living with schizophrenia, support for families and pathways to recovery and wellbeing.

RSVP by 13 May to David Barnes
03 6228 7448.

Program

Dates and location of events

DATE	LOCATION	TIME	VENUE
Sunday 16/5	Launceston	3.30-6pm	Door of Hope
Monday 17/5	Launceston	2.30-5pm	Tramsheds
Tuesday 18/5	Devonport	2-4.30pm	Entertainment & Convention Centre
Tuesday 18/5	Burnie	7.30-10pm	Braddon Hall, Burnie Arts & Function Centre
Thursday 20/5	Hobart	7.30-10pm	Mercure Hotel
Friday 21/5	Hobart	2.30-5pm	Glenorchy Civic Centre

Sandy Jeffs

Sandy Jeffs is an award-winning poet, writer and public speaker for SANE Australia.

Although she has lived with Schizophrenia and all its moods for 33 years, Sandy remains positive and upfront about her illness. She approaches the difficult topic of mental illness with great insight and humour. In fact her business card reads, 'Insanity Consultant.'

Sandy has become well-known for her work talking to school kids, university students, community groups, clinicians and conference delegates about her experiences. Sandy's powerful imagery and evocative poems provide people with a lasting impression of what it is like to suffer from hallucinations and delusions.

Sandy grew up and went to school in Ballarat in country Victoria. From there she went on to complete a Bachelor of Arts degree at Latrobe University. She has published many articles and five volumes of poetry. Topics range from madness, domestic violence, the trials and tribulations of playing midweek ladies' tennis to the mad world in which we live.

Sandy recently published her memoirs, *Flying with Paper Wings: Reflections on Living with Madness*, which is the SANE Australia Book of the Year for 2010. In his foreword Andrew Denton writes, 'Ultimately, it is Sandy's insight into fighting the monster of psychosis, which makes this book valuable to many people – too many – in our society that have had to fight similar demons.'

As a speaker for SANE Australia Sandy also has extensive media experience and is known for her appearance in the ABC TV Documentary, *Angels and Demons*.



Good News

Did you know?

Tasmania's Magistrates Court Mental Health Diversion List is helping to reduce the number of people with mental illness who end up as repeat offenders.

Jean Sebbage attended a meeting in March this year on behalf of ARAFMI Tasmania at which the Chief Magistrate, Michael Hill, shared with the large audience the outcomes of a 2-year Court Mental Health Diversion List project that has been operating in Hobart.

The aim was to address the problem of the same defendants constantly re-presenting, many of whom had mental health problems. The changed approach was introduced through collaboration between magistrates, Forensic Mental Health Court Liaison Officers, police prosecutors and legal practitioners.

Put simply, it means that Court Lists are rearranged to divert defendants with mental illness into specialist sittings, giving time for treatment and a number of informal reviews to explain the situation clearly and to ensure that support is available for the defendant.

The efforts to address offending behaviour made by the defendant during the diversion program may be taken into account by the Magistrate when considering a final sentence.

The trial has been successful and will now be established in the north of the State.

Do you want to know more?

Go to www.magistratescourt.tas.gov.au/publications/Presentations_and_Speeches or pick up a brochure from ARAFMI Tasmania offices in Hobart and Launceston.

You can also contact the Forensic Mental Health Court Liaison Officers on 6233 3610 (Hobart) or 6336 2605 (Launceston).



Profile: Jean Sebbage

Jean joined the ARAFMI Tasmania Committee of Management in 2009.

Jean arrived in Tasmania from the UK while she was still at school. She gained a degree at University of Tasmania and went on to teach high school English and History.

During her early career, she was regarded by some as a sophisticate, always the first with the most expensive outfits, mad about theatre and involved in amateur dramatics.

In her thirties, Jean married and had two sons. Motherhood brought out latent depression and anxiety and she spent some time in hospital.

However, she recovered quite quickly, joined ARAFMI and Grow and spent the next 20 years with her family, bushwalking and visiting historical sites. Jean's younger son broke down with Schizophrenia and she spent 11 years looking after him at home, which proved to be too hard and her son was taken into care.

In Jean's words,
'the passions I experienced throughout that time are tame compared to my passion for my family and desire to help the mentally ill. A bit of the old Jean remains, though, and I teach British history at Launceston School for Seniors. Sadly, I'm no longer regarded as a sophisticate, at least I don't think so.'

The Carer Recognition Bill 2010 has been introduced into Federal Parliament

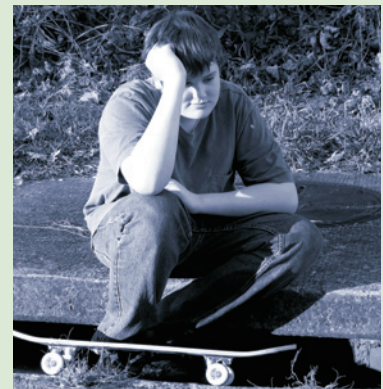
Legislation is currently before the Parliament to formally acknowledge the valuable contribution that carers make to Australian society. The legislation establishes who is a carer, contains a Statement for Australia's Carers, and sets up reporting and consultation arrangements for certain public service agencies. The Statement of Australia's Carers sets out ten principles to guide how public service agencies and their funding providers should treat and consider carers.

For more information on the Bill visit the Parliament House website at www.aph.gov.au

New Program

Family Information Sessions: Enhancing families' understanding of and skills in responding to anxiety, depression and psychosis

Recently ARAFMI Tasmania began daytime information sessions for families, on one Friday a month for three months, a total of nine hours in all. This is a shortened version of our longer 12-hour workshops delivered in previous years.



The first session, in March, focussed on **Anxiety and Depression**; in April **Bipolar Disorder** was discussed and the third and final session in May will cover **Schizophrenia**.

In addition to factual material about the disorders, tips on enhanced communication skills were offered.

Avenues for further assistance were also discussed, other than reliance only upon medication (yes, often essential, but only half the story). Options for self-care and communicating more effectively with clinicians were highlighted.

Attendance at the first two sessions has exceeded expectations, showing there's a real need in the community for this type of program.

The feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive and we are seeking funds to continue this program in other areas of the state. We hope, too, to be able to offer sessions at different times to suit working families.

We will keep you posted.

Northern News

- A new sign has at last been erected at the Howick Street site that will give a more visible presence to our location.
- The various ARAFMI Tasmania support groups continue to meet the needs of our community. The Peer Support Eating Disorders group has relocated to Headspace, as it offers a more youth friendly venue. The Bipolar Disorder Support group has seen a number of new members this year.
- ARAFMI Tasmania will again be participating at Agfest this year in the Mind Your Mind exhibition. Volunteers would be appreciated and if you are going to Agfest, drop in and say hello.
- Tim Lyall's Administration Assistant position is secure until the end of June as ARAFMI Tasmania was successful in obtaining some gap funding from the Mental Health Services. The ongoing prospects for this position will be clearer once the State Government's budgetary process has been completed towards the end of May.
- Kerryal Willis is back, rested and content, after her lovely break. Graham Booth will be away from the beginning of May to mid August.
- There is an ongoing need for more phone befrienders. If you are aware of someone with the caring experience and the ability to share and care in a non-judgemental manner let us know.

Southern News

- The Family Information Sessions, conducted by Anne Bevan, have been a great success (see page 2).
- Recent support meetings for families and friends have been well attended. Speakers, including Graham Lake from Mental Health Services Helpline and Elida Meadows, an advocate for refugees with mental health issues, have been well

received. Support group meetings are seen to be of real assistance to Carers looking for information and the opportunity for sharing their experience with others in similar circumstances.

- ARAFMI Tasmania volunteers provide valuable support for ARAFMI Tasmania services in a variety of ways. The work of Eric Harthill in the Bowen Road office is much appreciated. Thanks are due, too, to Anne Cordts and Anne Bevan who ensure that the Helpline continues to provide information and support for callers between 10am and 10pm each day. Their experience and understanding of the issues faced by Carers is appreciated by those in need of assistance.
- A member of the Southern Regional Committee, Ariella Williams, will be attending a meeting of the Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia in Darwin in late April. These meetings are an important source of information on what is taking place in mental health around the country and at a national level. In addition, opportunities for sharing in project development with other states arise from time to time.
- The ARAFMI Tasmania Annual General Meeting will be held in Hobart on Saturday 18 September this year. This is a first for ARAFMI Tasmania as the three previous AGMs have been held in Launceston. This will be an opportunity for southern Carers to show their support for ARAFMI Tasmania.

North-West News

ARAFMI Tasmania has increased its presence in the North West of the state with the appointment of Rod Lambert to the Committee of Management. This provides us with a voice in some of the local forums and networks. The Schizophrenia Week events will bring the ARAFMI Tasmania name even more exposure in this area as will working in partnership with other service providers.

Mental Health Services Consumer and Carer Participation Review

Recommendations from the Consumer and Carer Participation Review continue to be implemented under the guidance and support of a Review Implementation Advisory Committee. This Advisory Committee consists of mental health consumer, family and carer representatives; delegates from ARAFMI Tasmania, the Mental Health Council of Tasmania, Club Haven and Mental Health Services.

The development of policies to support consumer and family/carer participation in mental health services is currently being progressed for the consideration of the Advisory Committee prior to implementation. Timeframes for implementation of each of the Review recommendations have been identified with a view to ensuring that each component is thoroughly considered and developed prior to endorsement and implementation.

The development of a new independent statewide consumer organisation remains a priority and is being progressed with the advice and support of the Review Implementation Advisory Committee. Further announcements regarding the process of developing a new consumer organisation will be made over the coming weeks.

Lynette Pearce

Senior Consumer and Carer Liaison Consultant
Statewide and Mental Health Services

www.arafmitas.org.au

National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF)

This is the combined national voice for consumers and carers participating in the development of mental health policy, reform and sector development in Australia. For the past year Anne Bevan, Secretary of ARAFMI Tasmania, has been the Tasmanian Carer Representative.

Anne writes: Forum position papers are produced regularly, with the latest being the *Privacy & Confidentiality Issues Paper*. Go to the NMHCCF website <http://www.nmhccf.org.au/> to read it. You'll find a number of papers on different topics, covering issues you might like to speak to clinicians and politicians about to help improve mental health services in Tasmania!

It is with some regret that, due to other commitments, I resigned recently. I have enjoyed my 12 months immensely.

What a wonderful bunch of highly skilled and motivated people! I would encourage any carer/family member to apply.

Induction and free 'training' is provided to assist people new to more formal processes of participation.