

Snippets from the Aged Task Force Meeting 15th November 2005

**NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 14TH February 2005, 9.30AM, at Healthy Cities Illawarra, 63 Auburn Street, Wollongong. RSVP on 42265000
We will be planning our activities for 2006.**

Welcome to the last addition of 'The Snippets' for 2005. The Aged Task Force activities and meetings are presented in this summary and action format. It has been a busy and productive year.

Meeting Attendance

The meeting was chaired by Sarah Varley, present were Norm Melvin, Nancie Melvin, Pauline Milton, Peter Hutten, Karen Tavener -Smith

Apologies were received from Anita Mulally (IECC), Reg Lobb and Jan Rosen (IRT), Pam Hennen

Election of Chairperson

Sarah Varley from Wollongong City Councils Aged and Disability Services was unanimously voted in for a second term as chair. Sarah's skills and knowledge in aged care is a tremendous asset and she has kept our group focused and motivated to take action.

Working Groups Update

Photographic Library is Born



The Aged Task Force presents the "Time of Our Lives" photographic library exhibition to the Illawarra community. This is a collection of photographs by local amateur photographers. They highlight ageing as a positive experience and acknowledge and celebrate the contribution made by older people.

The photographic library is a travelling exhibition and is available free for loan to community organisations, businesses and groups in 2006. It is a resource that can assist organisations in promoting their services and activities for older people and be used as an exhibition at local events.

The library consists of 40 large high quality laminated photographs that are portable and easily mounted on walls and boards at community events. The photographs can be booked by contacting Healthy Cities Illawarra on 4226 5000.

Action: *Congratulations to working Party of Norm and Nancie Melvin, Pauline Milton, Pam Hennan .Karen TS to develop loan kit and guidelines.*

Seniors and Banking

The Commonwealth Bank has replied to the ATF letter of concern and has given endorsement for the spread information of the 'Banking Made Easy" seminars to local seniors groups. Our successful media release advising seniors about ATM use, also saw calls from the community highlighting issues with learning the use of mobile phones. Programs involving Youth Groups and schools in reverse mentoring were discussed. This can possibly be addressed next year.

Action: *In 2006 to look to an intergenerational activity with regards to mobile phone technology.*

Oral Health: Residential Care Facilities receive dental chairs

Thank you to the local clubs: **Dapto Leagues, Wollongong Ex Services Club and Collegians** for supporting an ATF application to Clubs NSW Community Support Expenditure Scheme. These clubs provided at total of \$7000 for second hand dental chairs to be distributed to Residential Care Facilities (RCF) in Wollongong LGA. The monies allow for the purchase of three chairs and overhead treatment lights. Following an expression of interest process the successful facilities were:

- Anglicare Chesalon Woonona
- Unanderra Care Services
- Woonona Nursing Home

At our November stakeholder meeting Dylan Hepworth, Care Quality Officer from Warrigal Care spoke of the Oral Hygiene Assessment Tool that he has developed including care plan guidelines and ways to approach common dental problems. Warrigal has also developed site champions and best practice guidelines, as have many local facilities. The Oral Health in Residential Care training program conducted By SESI Health has been recommenced, with the second tier of training being rolled out on December. As the stakeholder group has met its objectives for the year, it will not reconvene unless requested by members of the group.

The ATF is interested in pursuing training of carers and relatives in oral health care. To this end contact was made with Peter King, Senior Dentist at the Hunter and lecturer at the Uni of Sydney. He has conducted training programs and was keen to support any similar initiatives in the Illawarra. He related that research has found that oral care both by relatives in homes and in facilities are lacking and feels that any efforts to improve understanding and skills in this area would only be beneficial to older people. He is developing a 20 minute DVD for carers of people with dementia and is happy to share this. He also informed the ATF of a local AHS dentist who has completed the training and can be approached for support with local carers programs.

Action: The ATF will look to supporting carers training initiatives for community carers and relatives in 2006.

Oral Health and Electric Toothbrushes

At our Oral health meeting electric toothbrushes were discussed as a useful aid for older people and carers. They are a good present for relatives to purchase on special days. Please let friends and family know of this great present idea!!

Australian Association of Gerontology Symposium - Ageing In 'My' Place

"We are not disabled by accident or illness rather by surroundings"

This was the message of the Gerontology Association regional seminar in Wollongong. It was well attended with guest presenter, Professor Jon Pynoos from the University of Southern California raising many interesting perspectives. The symposium brought together the latest information on research; policy and practice in helping older people stay in their own homes longer. Professor Pynoos emphasized that we need to recognize that the home is the long term care setting of the future and that awareness should be raised about building a home for life. He spoke of the concept of 'universal homes' where there is good access to main level of the house and the home is friendly to all ages. Some features of these homes are no steps at entrance, wide doorways and bathrooms on the ground floor. The seminar also heard that well designed houses promoted independence and delayed need for home help services.

Plans for 2006

The group discussed its plans for 2006. Anita Mullay from the Illawarra Ethnic Communities Council tabled a number of issues by email. These included the need of frail older people to visit loved ones at cemeteries; lack transport for frail older people and the isolation of cemeteries make it impossible to visit grave sites of their loved ones. This leads to feelings of guilt and frustration, which turns to depression. In many cultures, it is essential to visit loved ones on certain anniversaries or remembrance days. Also, an unmet need for grief counseling for older people. Also raised were retirement planning, people with disabilities ageing in the community, ageing carer's, accessible public facilities and Seniors Week seminars to highlight issues.

The group concluded that it would look to two to three initiatives next year depending on resources and commitment. Final plans will be made at the first meeting in February 2006. The main priorities for 2006 will be:

- An oral health carer's program
- Intergenerational initiative around mobile phone technology use

To be considered a partnership initiative for 'grief counseling and cemetery visits'.

Interested in joining the taskforce?

Is there an issue you would like to raise? The Aged Task Force has open membership and always welcomes new members, for more information please call Karen Tavener-Smith on 4226 5000.

Our aims are:

- To have a taskforce that is broadly representative of all stakeholders, including older people, aged care service providers, government and non-government agencies.
- To provide a forum for the exchange of information between service providers, older people and those with an interest in matters which affect older adults?
- To increase community awareness and response about the issues which affect the health and well being of older people in the Illawarra.
- To listen to the needs and concerns of the older community and prioritise these and develop strategies to address them.
- To advocate for the best possible level of service provision for older people.

Aged Task Force Review of Mailing Details

Do you still want to receive information about ATF activities?

If you wish to continue receiving correspondence.....do nothing!!! If you wish to be removed from the mailing list or have a new address please inform us by calling **(02) 4226 5000**.