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# Banksia Palliative Care Service

## Newsletter



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Issue No 30

April 2006

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### Editorial

For the past 18 months, Banksia along with other metropolitan palliative care agencies has been presenting a case to the Department of Human Services (Victoria) for additional funding in response to an increase in referrals for palliative care services. Whilst the Department has listened to our concerns, no additional funding had been forthcoming.

However, I am pleased to report that the Department recently provided one-off funding for community based palliative care agencies in Victoria to assist in demand issues (waiting lists) and information technology issues. Whilst this does not solve the problem of a need for a permanent increase in operational funding, it will assist Banksia in 2005/06 to cope with increases in referrals and provide additional at home support with equipment and respite nursing. Banksia will continue to lobby for a permanent recurrent increase in operational funding to enable us to respond appropriately to increased referrals.

### Grants

Banksia has been successful with submissions to the Commonwealth Department of Health & Ageing Local Palliative Care Grants Program.

The Round One Project is called "The Use of Syringe Drivers in Aged Care for Palliative Care Residents". This 12 month project under the coordination of Banksia's Julie Paul will ensure that Aged Care Facilities across the Northern Metropolitan Region have access to syringe drivers and that Division 1 Nurses within these facilities are trained and competent in inserting and managing a syringe driver. This will benefit residents and families by ensuring appropriate and timely pain management with the use of a syringe driver in the aged care facility. This will potentially decrease admissions to hospital due to poor pain control and will enable aged care residents to die at their own aged care home which is often their preference. The facilities involved will also act as a resource for other aged care facilities looking to introduce syringe drivers as

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### BANKSIA'S MAJOR FUNDRAISING EVENT

Banksia's 7th Auction/Dinner evening will be held on Thursday June 22, 2006 at The Centre, Ivanhoe (Ivanhoe Town Hall). This event is the major fundraiser for Banksia and is a vital part of our need to supplement government subsidies with other forms of financing our programs and services.

Previous auction evenings (1996-2005) have raised \$120,000. The evening is always great fun with comedians and the MC keeping the guests entertained between the diverse and large items being auctioned. All of the items auctioned are donated by local or State companies or individuals. If you are interested in either coming to the evening or donating to the evening by providing an item or service to be auctioned, please contact Tim Paul or Alan Johns on 9497 2100. Tickets (tables of 10 available) can be purchased by contacting the above number.



See flyer in this Newsletter for more details

a pain management option. Currently it is estimated that syringe drivers are only used for one to two residents per year on average for each facility. It is estimated that this would increase to approximately ten residents per facility per year as a direct result of the project. This project continues Banksia's commitment in increasing the understanding of palliative care in aged care facilities with training and support through Banksia's Learning Centre.

The Round Two Project is called "**The Pastoral Care Worker Project**". The purpose of this 18 month project managed by Banksia's Neville Walker, is to employ a pastoral care worker who will coordinate the psycho-social and spiritual care of culturally and linguistically diverse clients in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. The pastoral care worker will work in conjunction with partner agencies at all times, to procure home based services in the client's preferred language.

This collaborative Project shall provide clients with:

- information in their language of choice
- the opportunity to have services provided by people from their own culture
- community information sessions to enhance access for individuals who are unaware of community based palliative care services
- culturally specific pastoral care.

The key objectives of the project are:

- to increase collaboration between Banksia, the Migrant Resource Centre, the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service and other relevant health services in the local area
- to increase access to palliative care services for culturally and linguistically diverse palliative care clients
- to increase culturally and linguistically appropriate pastoral care.

Whilst the target areas are initially the local government areas of Whittlesea, Banyule and Nillumbik, it is expected that the outcomes of the project will flow onto other LGA's in the North and West metropolitan areas.

There are a number of key activities that Banksia is required to do as part of the funding agreement:

- Develop a Project Reference Group to oversee the Project
- Develop protocols to improve coordination and collaboration between Banksia, the Migrant Resource Centre and the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service
- Develop training for Home & Community Care workers (HACC) on palliative care services available based on feedback from reference group and the community groups they represent.

- Develop pamphlets for the community on how to access palliative care services and descriptive information about services available
- Translate the pamphlet into languages as specified by the reference group
- Develop and provide community information sessions to promote the pamphlet and services available and to gain information from community on barriers to accessing services and ways of promoting the services further
- Develop and provide training for palliative care staff based on findings from the reference group and community information sessions
- Survey clients, their families and volunteers
- Prepare evaluation reports
- Liaise with the National Overview and Evaluation Project Team to contribute to the National Overview and Evaluation Project
- Ensure that a representative of the Project attends and participates in Pastoral Care Counselling and Support Workshop(s) to be held approximately once a year for the duration of the Agreement; and
- Contribute as appropriate to information sharing and discussion forums established by the National Overview and Evaluations Project Team.

This is a major project that continues Banksia's commitment to improving the understanding of palliative care in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

### Supporting a Grieving Person

The Social Work Department at Banksia were successful in obtaining a grant from the Sir William Anglis Trust to write a series of pamphlets on bereavement. Congratulations to Margaret Haywood for her authorship. A copy of one of these new innovative pamphlets follows:

#### SUPPORTING A GRIEVING PERSON



Like the Banksia  
we all grow from small beginnings,  
blossom and flourish  
and eventually decline  
and die

Like the Banksia  
devastated by fire  
Our greatest growth and  
strength can be  
stimulated by traumatic events

## Supporting a Grieving Person

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*"The only real death is being forgotten". (Unknown)*  
*"It is important to realise that those to whom we most need to turn in our own grieving have also been wounded by the same loss"*  
*R. Neimeyer*

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Our society typically fails to recognise the length of time grieving takes – especially where the person who has died was central to the life of the bereaved. There are no time lines for grief, and although the acute stage may abate over the years, there is a sense in which the loss will continue to affect the person for the rest of their life.

To-day the pace of life is fast, and the bereaved person is unrealistically expected to be "back to normal" after only a few weeks. This is reinforced by the grieving person "looking normal", with their emotions "under control", and possibly having resumed work or other normal activities. In fact, once the numbness following the death recedes (after several weeks) the emotional pain and anguish increases (peaking at approximately 6 months) followed by the slow adjustment to their "new normal". As Robert Neimeyer maintains "Whether we like it or not, we will never be our "old self again" following a major loss, although we can rebuild an identity appropriate to our new role." The grieving person is likely to be experiencing many strong and often conflicting emotions – some days manageable and other days feeling out of control. Fatigue, forgetfulness and irritability are the frequent result of their energy and attention being focussed on their loss.

### How can we Help?

- Acknowledge the loss as soon as possible, mentioning the person by name, and if possible, sharing a memory of their life and activities.
- Many people worry about what to say and avoid contact for this reason. It is your physical presence and willingness to listen which is important, but it can often help to say "I don't know what to say".
- Platitudes, such as "Only the good die young", or "He's gone to a better place", are not helpful to the bereaved. A hug, a note, or a small gesture of care is much more acceptable.
- It is important not to avoid the person or the subject of the loss, as avoidance is usually perceived by the grieving person to be a rejection.
- If you are comfortable, gently encourage the person to talk, as it is by the frequent repetition of their experiences that the grieving person gains both understanding and mastery of their situation.

- If a person starts to cry, accept this expression of their pain. You did not cause it – the sadness was there. Alternatively, if a person doesn't cry, it doesn't mean that they are not in pain.
- Accept that you cannot take their pain away, and any attempt to make them "cheer up" invalidates or minimises their loss. Allow their expression of feelings – guilt, sadness, anger – without trying to talk them out of it. A response such as "You must be feeling really bad to feel so guilty" is an indication that you are accepting what they are sharing with you.
- Offer support – maintaining contact over time. Those who grieve are often unable to respond in the early weeks/months, but would value contact later.
- Offer help, but do not give advice. Encouraging them to have a holiday or join a club, for example, is extremely difficult in the early months following a death. The only advice, which can be gently proposed, is to dissuade the grieving person from making any major life changing decision in the first year (although even then some may be necessary, and the person needs support in following through their decision).
- There is no one right way to grieve, and we all grieve differently according to our personality, culture, upbringing, circumstances of the loss etc. If you are concerned about how the person is grieving, encourage them to seek help, or obtain information to give them.
- The most important action we can take is to really LISTEN, without judgement. It can be very difficult to sit with another's pain, and may even trigger an emotional response about past experiences in our own life. However it is these expressions of feeling which can help a person to move on with their grief. If you feel that you cannot deal with this intensity of feeling try not to block their verbal expression, but you do not need to encourage it. You may prefer to offer to undertake some helpful task instead.
- It is our own fears that may prevent us from listening or inhibit our capacity to help. These fears include :
  - fear of intruding on a sensitive subject
  - fear of triggering another's hurt and causing pain
  - fear being unable to contain this expression of feelings
  - fear of triggering emotional responses from our own past
  - fear of becoming out of control emotionally

## Helping the Grieving Person return to Work or Interest Group

- Acknowledge their return and the reason for their absence, telling them how much their presence has been missed, and acknowledging that it must be difficult for them to return.
- Lower your expectations of their volume of work or the responsibilities they need to undertake, but remember that many grieving people need to be constantly busy to keep their feelings at bay.
- Where a person has lost their partner, expect that there will be additional demands on the person to undertake the roles of both themselves and their partner. Changes in both their domestic and financial situations will impact on their work or group participation. The most common response to these stresses is extreme fatigue.
- A normal "symptom" of grief is some forgetfulness, absent mindedness, and occasional confusion, as their subconscious minds are constantly on their loss. This will fluctuate, but may last for many months or years. The pain will continue, although the person may be able to conceal this when in public. It is therefore important to be tolerant and make allowances as though the person has suffered a major illness.

## Offers of Practical Help are Appreciated

People typically ask the grieving person to let them know what they can do to help. This offer is most unlikely to be acted on, and the following are suggestions about the type of tasks you may wish to offer to the bereaved.

### In the days after the death

- Help with answering the phone, or notifying friends/acquaintances of the death.
- Make lists of what needs to be done, so that tasks are not forgotten
- Bring a meal
- Volunteer to do errands or shopping
- Care for the children
- Drive the person to appointments

### In the months after the death

- Bring/share a meal
- Provide practical help or investigate resources available to remedy practical problems
- Spend time to listen
- Help with housework or garden
- Include the person/s in inviting them on outings which you have planned
- Remember anniversaries, birthdays and significant dates
- Encourage, and perhaps accompany them to undertake new activities

- Continue to remember and reminisce about the person who died

## Friends of Banksia Update

The Friends of Banksia have been syndicated into autonomous different groups and are embracing their fundraising tasks in a very dedicated manner for the organisation.

For information, the 2005 Christmas Raffle made its highest return of approximately \$1,700. Our thanks to all those who assisted.

The Friends of Banksia volunteers are running a stall at the Wollert Wellbeing Market located at 525 Epping Road, Wollert, at the Community Hall near the CFA Building, on the second Sunday of each month. Three markets have raised approximately \$600. We are very grateful of any donations of craft, leather or any other appropriate item for the market stall for Bev, Katrina, Joan and Jean to sell. Pop in and say hello, the market is gaining popularity month by month. Many thanks to Pam Clune of Heaven & Earth Works Pty Ltd who runs the market for all her support and kindness.

Other volunteers, Jill, Thuy, Della, Alby, Debra and Rodney have been running a sausage sizzle on the second Saturday of each month at Mitre 10 Heidelberg, in Lower Heidelberg Road. The two barbeques so far have raised approximately \$340. We thank the sponsorship from The Big Butcher of Lipton Drive Thomastown, Bakers Delight of Burgundy Street Heidelberg and The Old England Hotel Lower Heidelberg in making the success of these barbecue's possible. .Mitre 10 staff have also been fantastic to Banksia's volunteers in assisting in running the BBQ.

In early April , a separate barbeque was run at the opening of the ANZ Bank Diamond Creek by the Friends of Banksia including Michelle and her family, Jill and Della. The barbecue raised over \$500. We are very appreciative of the sponsorship by Fabris Smallgoods of Airport West, Bakers Delight Diamond Creek and The Old England Hotel Heidelberg. The ANZ Bank staff were excellent on the day and MC former Collingwood Captain Ray Shaw gave us some good publicity.

Other groups of volunteers have been very busy in publicising and obtaining items for our major Fundraising Auction Night on 22 June 2006 at The Centre Ivanhoe in the Great Hall. We are desperate for ticket sales and for any items or services donated as early as possible. High profile guests will be in attendance to sign items and top class entertainment will be provided. \$60 a ticket provides you with hot and cold platters, dessert, coffee, wine, beer, soft

drink, and entertainment, whilst not forgetting the reason you are attending, to help the best community organisation in the north east suburbs.

Finally, we need more fundraising volunteers. If you know someone or you would like to join the Friends of Banksia, please contact Tim on 0407683821 and come to a meeting.

## Profiles

Welcome to **Kate Hewitt** Banksia's new Social Worker. Kate completed her Social Work Degree at La Trobe University last year and has been working as a Social Worker at Banksia for the past two months. She has previously worked as a nurse in the palliative care field for ten years.

Kate combined her love of travel with her Social Work Degree last year when she worked with at risk children and their families in the Philippines. She designed and facilitated the reproductive health program and the back to school program for adolescent youth.

Kate is enjoying her new and challenging position here at Banksia.

Although not a new staff member, another person who we see a lot more of these days is **Tracey Heath**. Tracey, a palliative care nurse, now relieves other nursing staff on a regular basis hence her frequency around the office and out in the community visiting clients.

Tracey Heath is a Registered Nurse who has worked in palliative care/aged care for over 20 years, Firstly as a Div 2 and then completing her Div 1 training. At present Tracey is undertaking her Masters in Palliative Care and hopes to complete this in 18 months. Over the years Tracey has been involved with World Vision travelling to many third world countries such as India, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Bangladesh. The highlight of these trips was spending time at "Mother Thereasa's Home for the Dying and Destitute" in Calcutta and the Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia with Dr Catherine Hamlin.

Tracey balances her work in palliative care with professional clowning ("Sparkey"), at children's parties, various special events and the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal.

Tracey really enjoys working with the team at Banksia, and considers it a great honour to care for both clients and their families.

## Poem by Carer

### Five Weeks

Five weeks ago I met some folks I'd never seen before.  
I walked into the room and wondered what might be in store.

Perhaps they thought the same as me as grief was in their faces, and maybe too they wished like me to be in other places.

But then we found as time went by our fears were quite unfounded. We talked of fears and poured out tears of quantity unbounded.

And now we know we're not alone in this our darkest hour, we've turned to thinking positive, our days not quite so sour.

We've also found that life goes on as surely as it must, and those folks I met five weeks ago are new friends I can trust.

Frank Lycett  
June 2005

## *Better Now than Never!*

Courtesy of some wonderful donations, the annual (2005) Christmas Raffle was won by:

1 <sup>st</sup> Prize	Stefan Kot (Roxburgh Park)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize	Gillian Jackson (Ivanhoe)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize	Mr & Mrs Watson (ex Banksia volunteers)



**BANKSIA PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICE**

**FUNDRAISING PROGRAM**

The Banksia Palliative Care Service Fundraising Program is designed to raise funds to assist the organisation in achieving its aims and objectives. The primary source of funds for Banksia comes via the Department of Human Services, Victoria, which includes grants from the Commonwealth Government. However, it is becoming increasingly necessary to seek financial support from other sources including the communities we service.

You may wish to help the organisation in a number of ways. Below are some suggestions on how you may help. Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

I enclose \$\_\_\_\_\_ to support the work of Banksia Palliative Care Service (BPCS)

Please debit my Credit Card in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_

Bankcard      Mastercard      Visa

Credit Card No:

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Cardholder's Signature                      Expiry Date

I wish to become a member of BPCS and enclose \$10 for annual membership.

I would like to know more about BPCS bequest program.

I am interested in learning what is involved in becoming a Volunteer Support Worker.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_