

# The Abbeyfield Observer

Abbeyfield Australia, PO Box 1293, Collingwood, Vic. 3066. [www.abbeyfield.org.au](http://www.abbeyfield.org.au)  
tel: (03) 9419 8222 fax: (03) 9419 8575 email: [admin@abbeyfield.org.au](mailto:admin@abbeyfield.org.au)

## In this edition

- From the Chairman's Desk
- Abbeyfield International News
- Richmond Abbeyfield House (Vic)
- Croydon/Ringwood House (Vic)
- Abbeyfield Australia Website
- Housekeeper Conference

## From the chairman's desk: Gay Gardner AM

Dear Abbeyfielders

Exciting events have taken place since my last letter to you.

Abbeyfield Australia Directors, in co-operation with Chris Reside our CEO, have convened three Local Societies Days in each of Tasmania, Victoria including South Australia, and the ACT and New South Wales. At each of these Local Societies days, members have been addressed by speakers on very relevant topics most useful to the "running" of Abbeyfield Houses. In addition the gathering together of representatives from each of the Local Societies has allowed for open exchanges on various issues generally common to each of the Houses.

This year representatives of the Marion Disability House in Edwardstown were present at the Victorian-South Australian Local Societies Day held in Melbourne. The Abbeyfield Disability House at Curtin in the ACT joined with the Abbeyfield Houses in the ACT and NSW for their Local Societies Day. Also joining this Local Societies Day were the Goulbourn Local Society representatives who with their committee will shortly extensively renovate the house they bought with funds provided by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC), NSW. They will establish another much needed Abbeyfield House for mildly intellectually disabled younger people.

Each of the Local Societies Days has been exciting and so worthwhile. So very many thanks to the Directors and to Chris Reside for co-ordinating these days.

I will soon write to members explaining the new system of membership of Abbeyfield Australia which is in accordance with our new constitution. May I advocate your membership of Abbeyfield Australia as a means of increasing our funding for the ultimate benefit of our present residents and providing increased housing in the future for people wishing for Abbeyfield accommodation. Such membership provides Abbeyfielders with the opportunity of playing a magnificent role in the direction of Abbeyfield and greater participation at our annual general meeting. Each member will receive a copy of our Abbeyfield Observer which contains news of our Abbeyfield Houses, Abbeyfield events both in Australia and internationally, and relevant legislative updates. A most useful and informative read. The membership application form is also available on our website.

*Gay Gardner AM, Abbeyfield Australia Chairman*

## Abbeyfield International News

On 1st October 2010 it is planned that Abbeyfield International should merge with The Abbeyfield Society in the UK. This will be subject to various approvals including that of The Abbeyfield Society's UK Annual General Meeting. The move will benefit both parties, and increase the scope of the movement's worldwide development. The UK has some 650 houses ranging from the basic model of sheltered house to care homes, dementia units and integrated care facilities. It has a very strong balance sheet of assets. Having international credentials will further enhance its reputation. The International Board will become the 'International Council'. Its executive will be run by TAS in the UK and the new International Director will have the benefit of a much enhanced budget and the resources of TAS to assist in outreach programs. Also, with technology advances conference calling facilities, and shared data bases, a more integrated worldwide community will evolve. However what will definitely be preserved is the Guiding Principles of the Abbeyfield movement, and the independence of the National Societies around the world. Steering this development are AI and TAS Chairmen, Moira Bacon and John Robinson.

Allan Snowie recently resigned from the AI Board and was sincerely thanked for his contribution to AI over many years of service, especially as the 'roving ambassador'.

Awards: JB Munro (New Zealand) has received a lifetime involvement award from Inclusion International, and Masayo Kidani an 'Order of the Rising Sun' medal for her lifetime services to the Red Cross, Abbeyfield, and other charities.

Milan Conference: The dates of 6th - 9th May 2011 have been confirmed for the Milan conference.

## A Brief History of the Abbeyfield House in Richmond

Prior to 1993 the church property at 269-273 Burnley Street consisted of the old Presbyterian Church at 271 Burnley Street, and a vacant unusable house at No. 273. The church was surrounded on the north and east sides by vacant land.

For many years the Richmond Uniting Church had been seeking ways in which the vacant land might be developed as a residence for older people from the Collingwood – Richmond area. This project appeared to be beyond its resources to establish and run, and was put on hold. Finally, after researching possible avenues which might enable the property to be used more



effectively under the auspice of an outside body, negotiations began with the Abbeyfield Society of Victoria Inc. (now Abbeyfield Australia Ltd.).

These negotiations resulted in a three-way agreement between the Commonwealth Government Ministry of Housing, The Abbeyfield Society of Victoria Inc. and the Uniting Church Synod of Victoria. The Uniting Church leased the land and the vacant house to The Abbeyfield Society at a peppercorn rent for a period of 55 years (till 2048). The Ministry of Housing built a home for 10 residents and renovated the existing house as a residence for the housekeeper. On completion, the property would be made over to The Abbeyfield Society of Victoria Inc.

A group of local public-minded individuals and representatives from the City of Yarra together with members of the Uniting Church established The Abbeyfield Society (Richmond) Inc.

In early 1994 the Hon. Rob Hulls turned the first sod.

Whilst the building work was carried out, the local Abbeyfield Society members busily sought funding from philanthropic trusts, the City of Yarra, the Uniting Church and various community groups, to provide furniture and fittings for the communal areas of the house, i.e. dining room, kitchen, laundry and lounge.

With two residents and a housekeeper in residence, the Hon. Rob Hulls in the presence of the Mayor of the City of Yarra and members of the local community officially opened the House in January 1995.

In November 1995 Leata Stewart became the new housekeeper, and she has been with us ever since. We have been extremely fortunate to have had her services, for not only is she an extremely good cook, but she has given the residents a sense of security and permanence making for a happy and safe home. Two people, Libby Roebuck and Deb Peryer ably support her at weekends on a fortnightly basis.

We have also been very fortunate over the years to have the support of the local Lions Club of Yarra. They have undertaken to do a variety of tasks, including gardening and regular window cleaning. One of their members, Milisa Aralica, has provided Christmas dinner for those few residents remaining in the House over the Christmas period – something for which they are very appreciative.

This is not to say that everything has gone smoothly. There have been fluctuating numbers, problems with some difficult residents as well as serious concerns about financial oversight. During those times we have been grateful for the support we have received from Abbeyfield Australia Ltd., and these issues have been resolved.

Subsequently, our Society has taken up the offer made by Abbeyfield Australia Ltd. to provide book keeping services via its office manager, Virginia Lawrence. This has been of tremendous assistance. It costs approximately \$200 per month and leaves the very small number of our committee time to concentrate on the more practical day to day issues.

It is with grateful hearts to all concerned that we look forward to another happy year.

*Dawn Phillips*

## **News from Croydon/Ringwood House.**

Our house is reaching 24 years of operation. Earlier this year one of our residents Rose, died, aged 93. She was one of the first residents to come into the house in 1986 and so had spent 23 plus years as a member of the Abbeyfield family. She was a lively person and until recently she continued to do her tapestry and knit for her great-great grand children. She had wonderful support from her family who lived nearby.

We have a photo at the house of Rose with Richard Carr-Gomm on the occasion of his visit to our house when he was in Australia.



The residents and committee agreed it would be a good idea to do something to remember Rose by, so we of course chose a 'rose' and have planted it in a special place.

A remembrance plaque was made by the men at the PAG (Planned Activity Group) that Rose used to attend.

The picture shows the rose and residents, committee members and the housekeeper at the planting ceremony.

*Anne O'Shaughnessy,  
Chairperson,*

## **Abbeyfield Australia Website**

Don't forget to check our website ([www.abbeyfield.org.au](http://www.abbeyfield.org.au)) for more information about the happenings of Abbeyfield. The website has information for Local Societies as well as for the general public.

## **Victoria and South Australian Abbeyfield State Conference, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2010**

The first session of the day focussed on fire safety, and was presented by representatives of the Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade. Particular emphasis was placed on the ability to access buildings and individual rooms. It was considered that each resident must consider their own safety, but that the Houses should also have regular fire drills and regular electrical checks. It was also noted that smoke alarms can be obtained for hearing impaired people.

Jo Broderick, account manager of the Insurance House Group, then provided some valuable information about Abbeyfield insurance. Abbeyfield is an aged care residential provider – insured under this specifically. She reminded participants of the need to be adequately covered and that annual revaluations should be undertaken to ensure that the values are right. (The same applies for our residents, who may wish to personally insure valuable items.) People who come onto the property to provide a service should be insured! There are also insurance implications for fundraising activities – do the people involved (such as jumping castle) have their own insurance? Houses should check with Jo if they have any queries or concerns about their cover. Jo can be contacted on ph 1300 305 834 or email [jo.broderick@ihgroup.com.au](mailto:jo.broderick@ihgroup.com.au). In the case of an incident that requires a claim, 'secure and safe' is what is most important, then notification. But any loss should be notified as quickly as possible – from loss of food from refrigerator breakdown, to storm damage. (Remember to consider your excess before making a small claim).

Brief House reports were presented, and each one provided interesting and relevant information. It was a good opportunity to share with others, and to 'compare notes'.

In another session two Local Society members told of how they successfully managed crises at their Houses. These sessions were very frank, informative and useful to all in attendance.

Participants enjoyed the day and everyone learned at least one new thing.

## **Abbeyfield Australia Housekeeper Conference 2010**

Twenty housekeepers attended the two day conference on 27 & 28 May 2010 and the feedback and evaluation was positive.

Speakers at the conference included Julie Harris and Gary Connolly (Metropolitan Fire Brigade), who gave a powerful presentation on fire safety in a group house with particular reference to 'clinical hoarders'. Doug Parker (Abbeyfield Mortlake), spoke on 'Adapting the Abbeyfield Model to meet local community needs', and Heather Liubicic ran an engaging session entitled 'Living with our customers – defining respect, communication and professional boundaries in an Abbeyfield House.

From the outcomes recorded, it was clear that everyone who attended found the conference to be useful. People were able to share achievements and concerns, clarify issues and seek feedback, and make recommendations and requests that will develop some consistency across the Houses and will assist them in their positions in the future.

Topics for next year's conference were also suggested, including a session on bullying and one on fire evacuation training.

### **From the Editor:**

If you think that this edition has been interesting, please send in a report of your House / activities – other readers will find your stories interesting too. The act of sharing our stories helps to bring us closer together within our Abbeyfield family.

Regards,

Jill Parker, Hon Editor.