

The Abbeyfield Observer

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From the Chairman's desk: Gay Gardner AM

Dear Members,

It is with great pleasure that I report on the Abbeyfield International Conference held in Milan from the 6th May until 9th May this year. Approximately 50 people travelled across the world to take part in this international event. Our CEO Chris Reside and I represented Australia in our respective roles.

The theme of the conference was "The Global Stage". Moira Bacon, the retiring chairman of Abbeyfield International spoke first about the theme. She stated that the objectives of the conference were to:

- 1) Share experiences of Abbeyfield operations and developments worldwide.
- 2) Consider the future strategy
- 3) Consider funding of new Abbeyfield houses.

Moira paid tribute to those who had contributed to the creation of Abbeyfield International in 1988, and through their efforts Abbeyfield Houses were being established in Australia, Canada, South Africa, the Netherlands and Italy. She brought the conference into the future by looking ahead at the 3 P's - People, People, People; three very significant points to consider most seriously.

People – residents; their needs, new communities

People – volunteers; value them, attract new volunteers

People – staff: with Abbeyfield ethos in their hearts

The second speaker was John Robertson, Chairman of The Abbeyfield Society (TAS) with which Abbeyfield International is currently merging (Please see separate article). I quote from John's speech, "Abbeyfield cares for the body, the physical aspects, but many do that. Abbeyfield also cares for the person, the soul".

John felt there were some questions which needed to be considered if we are successfully to move to the next phase of Abbeyfield's development: Is the Abbeyfield House we have the true Abbeyfield

model? Are we a business? Are we a charity? How do we grow internationally? These most pertinent points were considered during the conference proceedings.

The guest speaker Emi Kiyoto Ibasho President and Environmentalist gerontologist spoke in essence that in providing a home for people it is not necessary nor desirable to have a perfect and super efficient environment, but one which is like a person's own home, "in some ways inconvenient and inefficient so why do we strive to deliver this when building and providing services to the elderly? The important factors to focus on are to write the play, then design and build the stage". Emi's address gave conference members a great deal of food for thought in posing such a question.

In the afternoon delegates divided into interactive groups and discussed five topics. Each delegate was able to participate in three of the topics. Discussion ranged across 'Future recruitment of volunteers – how do we grow?', 'What is the Abbeyfield brand?', 'What is fit for purpose?', and 'How do we create an international community?' Lively participation ensued by each and every delegate!



A wonderful dinner party for delegates was held in the Palazzo Cusani - it was a truly grand and most exciting occasion with two opera singers performing the most beautiful excerpts from Figaro and other operas. It was a truly memorable evening. Sunday was a day to see Abbeyfield Houses in and around Milan.

On Monday, the final day of the conference, Zoe Paul – Executive Director, South Africa – gave an insight into Abbeyfield Houses in South Africa and the challenges being faced for the future. Zoe Paul's expose on South Africa was followed by the formation of interactive groups discussing how to fund new residences, and the options and strategies available for the purpose.

Paul Allan, who had given a brief introduction at the opening of the conference, referred back to the theme of the conference, "The Global Stage" describing how there is a:

- new International Director – David Coe
- need for a strategy for global growth
- need to promote local independence
- need for the global resource to support national initiatives

John Robinson concluded the conference by reinforcing the strength of the international family and the need to embrace the body and the soul.

Gay Gardner AM,

Abbeyfield Australia Chairman

News from Mt Gambier Abbeyfield House

April saw Abbeyfield Australia Director Jill Parker visit the Abbeyfield House in Mount Gambier, to share in the celebrations of its 20th birthday. The weather was amenable to a lovely outdoors party and a great day was had by all.

One of the features of the afternoon was the presentation of life membership of the Mt Gambier Society to long-time President, Mr Neil Dickins. The Mt Gambier House's housekeeper, Mrs Morva Gurney was also recognised for her wonderful contribution to the house.



Neil and Bernice Dickins



Neil Dickins and housekeeper Morva Gurney

Abbeyfield Curtin's health promotions grant

It is nearly five years since Abbeyfield Curtin took its first residents. The residents continue to thrive, however the Management Committee has noticed a tendency for a slight weight gain in some residents. To address this, and to give the residents skills in maintaining a healthy lifestyle, the Curtin Management Committee applied to the ACT Government for funding under its 2011 Health Promotions Grants. The Curtin Management Committee was delighted that Nutrition Australia agreed to be our partner in the exercise.

The objectives of the program include:

- the housekeepers using a new nutritional framework as a guideline for meal preparation;
- 70 per cent of participating residents being able to identify four healthy snacks for keeping in their room, and having the nutritional knowledge to make healthier choices when purchasing the foods they keep in their rooms for snacks;
- developing a nutritional manual that can also be used by other supported accommodation houses;
- 80 per cent of participating parents, guardians and carers being able to list three benefits of healthy eating and three ways they can support the housekeepers and residents to maintain new behaviours;
- 50 per cent of participating residents participating in at least one new physical activity and being able to give one reason why physical activity is important for a healthy life.

Curtin was thrilled to receive the \$24,000 grant and the residents, housekeepers and Nutrition Australia are all excited about participating in the project, and seeing positive outcomes for everyone.

2011 Housekeeper Conference

Fifteen housekeepers attended the two day 2011 Abbeyfield Housekeeper Conference held during Melbourne during April 2011. In a busy conference program, the 2011 conference included four particularly interesting sessions on topics including:

- Practical fire safety - an interactive session conducted at the Metropolitan Fire Brigade's training headquarters in the correct use of fire reels, fire extinguishers and fire blankets. All of the housekeepers rated this session very highly on their evaluation forms;
- Mary Lucas, a dietician with a particular interest in the dietary needs of older people, spoke about the importance of including all food types in a varied diet. This session also scored well on Conference Evaluation Forms, with one housekeeper commenting that the session was a great confidence booster that confirmed she was doing the right thing;
- As a direct result of a request from the 2010 Conference, Adjunct Professor David Caple, from La Trobe University, conducted a session dealing with many aspects of bullying. Firstly, he

defined bullying from an OH&S viewpoint, and then he discussed various types of bullying and ways of dealing with them; and

- Sue McVeigh, Director of Nursing at the Wyndham Lodge Community Aged Care facility spoke about the importance of handling spills of bodily fluids in a manner that prevents the spread of infection. Sue illustrated her talk using an inexpensive 'spill kit' containing all of the items required and provided a useful handout, as a reminder.



2011 housekeeper conference

Narrabri Abbeyfield House receives \$2.56M funding

Abbeyfield Australia and the Narrabri Abbeyfield Branch are thrilled at the recent announcement by Andrew Constance, NSW Minister for Disability Services, of \$2.56M capital funding to develop the Narrabri Abbeyfield House. In announcing the grant, the Minister said "The development of alternative accommodation models that respond to the needs of people with a disability is a welcome initiative, and I commend the efforts and commitment of Abbeyfield in working towards the provision of independent living for young adults."

Recently appointed director Andrew Moylan accepted the funding on behalf of Abbeyfield Australia.

Narrabri is situated in northern NSW and is the hub of the Narrabri Shire Council with a population of about 14,000 people. The Narrabri Abbeyfield House will accommodate adults with a mild intellectual disAbility and incorporate:

- 10 comfortable residents' rooms of approximately 33sqm with a motel style kitchenette/ living room, a private ensuite, and separate bedroom.
- two guest rooms – available for use by visitors or for emergency or respite accommodation
- a housekeeper residential unit
- comfortable shared lounge rooms, dining room and courtyard
- a recreation / games room.

Responding to the Minister's announcement in Narrabri on 26 July 2011, Abbeyfield Australia CEO Chris Reside said the funding is further recognition of the Abbeyfield model as an innovative and resident focussed housing solution, and well demonstrated the readiness of the NSW Government to support innovative and effective community based housing solutions.

The local Narrabri Abbeyfield Branch has been well led by branch president, Marion Pike and her committee, and the funding is a testament to the community support for the Narrabri Abbeyfield House and the diligence of the local Abbeyfield Branch.

Abbeyfield Australia wishes to recognise the significant contribution of Barwon MP, Kevin Humphries who had supported the project since its inception; Eastern Star Gas which funded an independent feasibility study into the project; the Narrabri Sire Council, and the team at the Department of Ageing Disability and Homecare (ADHC) without whose support the project could not have eventuated.

The construction of the Narrabri Abbeyfield House will be overseen by Abbeyfield Australia and the Narrabri Abbeyfield Branch using local / regional tradespeople and consultants.

Recent Abbeyfield Australia board appointments

The Abbeyfield Australia Board appointed three new directors at its meeting on 9 July 2011. The three new directors are:

- The Hon. David Hawker – former Federal member for Wannon (27 years) and former speaker of the House of Representatives
- Eddy Bourke – policy officer with Australia's peak community housing organisation, the Community Housing Federation of Australia (CHFA)
- Andrew Moylan – business consultant specialising in the financial planning industry, and Board member of the Charingfield Aged Care Hostel in Sydney. (A joint venture between Abbeyfield Australia and the Christian Brothers.)

The new Directors each bring to the Board specific skills and experience necessary to assist Abbeyfield Australia achieve its financial, service and growth targets. They were warmly welcomed to the Board by Chairman Gay Gardner.



Abbeyfield Australia board members (L to R): Leo Hurst, Andrew Moylan, Gay Gardner, David Kay, Alison Hancock, David Hawker, Jacqui Landos, John Lawrence, Jill Parker, Eddy Bourke, and Andrew Dixon. (Absent: Dimitri Kiriacoulacos)

Editor's note:

I hope that you have enjoyed this edition of the Abbeyfield Observer.

Contributions from local societies, members and residents are always very welcome. So if you have a story, please send it to me! (Contributions are preferred in a word.doc format emailed to admin@abbeyfield.org.au.) Photos are also very welcome.

Regards,

Jill Parker, Hon Editor.