

BranchingOut



A Word from

Issue 2, June 2013

Anne Irvin, Finance Manager

Welcome to the second issue of Branching Out. With the annual financial reporting period fast approaching I thought I would take this opportunity to highlight the importance of monthly branch reporting.

Firstly, congratulations and thank you – 84% of branches are sending their monthly financials to Sydney. I recognise that monthly reporting creates a greater level of paperwork for branches, but it is very important that the Board is informed about all branch accounts as the board members are legally responsible for the whole Can Assist organisation, including branches. It is not sufficient for them to have access to the entire financial affairs of the organisation just once a year.

As promised, in recognition of your efforts, branches who have been reporting monthly will

not need to submit all the branch paperwork at the end of the financial year. Can Assist will be able to audit your financials free of charge on the basis of the monthly reports.

Branches which have not provided monthly reports will need to send the 2012-13 financial reports to the Sydney office as all branches are now required to have their reports audited by the Can Assist auditor Dobbs Vumbaca & Co.

A new development is that monthly financial results for the whole organisation will be published in the branch section of the website. To assist you we have placed the simple templates for monthly reporting on the website under the branch log-in section.

Please contact me if you need assistance with the monthly branch reports.

With best wishes,
Anne

Keeping Safe

We are pleased to report that **Keeping Safe**, Can Assist's work, health and safety guidelines, was launched in the last quarter. At the April 28 branch consultation delegates were given training in the simple and easy to use Keeping Safe process.

Julie Hillier, Branch Manager, will be in contact with the branches who could not attend the consultation in the coming months. In the meantime, all branches have been emailed a copy of the guidelines, checklists and the training presentation.

Thankfully, our branches are a common sense bunch who look after each other, their members and supporters. Please remember that the Work Health Safety Act 2011 does require Can Assist to provide reasonable direction to its volunteers. Please ensure you are aware of common risks and are eliminating or minimising these risks. Your feedback matters. Please contact Julie Hillier to discuss the process or to receive support and assistance in Keeping Safe.

Keeping Safe hint

Remember to include Keeping Safe as an agenda item at your branch meetings and to send a copy of your monthly minutes to the Sydney office.

Keeping Safe hint – Avoid repetitive strain injuries

When setting up tables at fundraising events ensure that they are at a comfortable and even height. Regularly rotate repetitive tasks done by volunteers.

Profile

Can Assist Tumbarumba by Bob Ayliffe, President

As branches are aware, new laws apply to charities regarding Workplace Health & Safety. Though we are volunteers we are all deemed to be workers or employees and Can Assist, the umbrella organisation, has legal responsibility for our safe work practices.

Each year a sample of three branches will assist the Sydney office in understanding the common risks we branches face. Being the baby of the bunch, the smallest branch, Tumbarumba had the honour of being the first cab off the rank in early February.

Sydney sent the charming Ambassadors-at-large, Julie and Jess, who walked us through a most unthreatening process, held our hands all the way: no sweat, no threat.

Given the demographic of our branch and maybe other branches too, there really are a few risk factors associated with what we do, most of them in the “slips, trips and falls” categories. All of which we have been addressing post-haste.

One of the issues was the lifting, carrying and erecting of the standard-issue tent. Ours has

been enhanced with heavy side screens to protect us not from the sun but the fierce winds that blow down from Kosciusko way, regardless of season. Together with the heavy duty canvas carry bag, hammer and anchors that go with the territory.

A big strain on the arthritic back of the president for whom possession is a badge of office. Porting it, loading it into a vehicle, carrying it to allocated site, erecting the uncooperative tent rated in the red zone on the WHS grid.

So a typical bush solution was required. Anyone got an ancient golf buggy? The perfect fit, no modifications needed. The heavy end sits where the bottom end of the golf bag used to go and you just tow it along. Tow it, load it, no more buggered back!

Plus Julie and Jess did an amazing Laurel and Hardy community presentation double act. Get them to do one while they are doing the risk assessment and I bet you'll sign up a few new members! We got ourselves five new paid-up members, a 20% increase, along with an offer of a potentially lucrative fundraising activity.

Focus on: Branch Consultation

Following on from the branch consultation in November 2012, 29 branch delegates came to Sydney in April 2013 to discuss the next stage of our future direction, specifically, the accommodation facility in Sydney.

As you are aware, Can Assist no longer provides accommodation at the Jean Colvin Cancer Centre. Country cancer patients are given accommodation at Quest Apartments in Bondi Junction. This interim arrangement has been very successful with 97% to 98% occupancy and a waiting list of people needing accommodation.

Kay Hull, Can Assist Board President, spoke at the April consultation about the founding purpose of Can Assist – to provide accommodation in Sydney for people from regional and rural areas so that they could have an affordable and supportive place to stay while they received cancer treatment in Sydney. It all began in Sydney, by a group of Sydney women.

This need is as strong as ever and was highlighted by Ruth Jones, Director Cancer Services & Innovation Western NSW LHD in her presentation.

Richard Appleby, CEO, gave an update on Can Assist's application to the Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) for a significant amount of funding for us to use to provide a new accommodation facility in Sydney. The new facility would provide a mix of 'charity' room rates and commercial room rates which would ensure Can Assist's sustainability.

At the consultation, 28 of the 29 delegates supported a motion to ask their branch for a one-off capital contribution of branch funds to go towards the accommodation facility.

We ask that all branches discuss a once only, 15% contribution with their members. Branches will have 12 months to make the contribution.

This is truly an exciting time in the history of Can Assist and we look forward to keeping you updated as to progress over the coming months.

Important Update: Members were informed via email by the CEO in June - unfortunately the Can Assist application has not been successful.

Disappointed as we are, our strategy remains the same. We are committed to providing viable accommodation in Sydney for regional and rural cancer patients and their carers. We will need to entertain a different model of operation and we are working on that with the Board and management. We appreciate your continued support. You may ask "does Sydney still require the contribution of 15% from branches?" The answer is yes – as our strategy endures this set back.

Branch Awards & Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following branches and members on receiving service awards:

Can Assist Temora: 30 Years of Service
Can Assist Peak Hill: 21 Years of Service
Can Assist Young-Boorowa: 25 Years of Service
Beryl Breed – Can Assist Leeton: Honorary Life Member
Mavis Turner – Can Assist Gundagai: Honorary Life Member

Your View

Can Assist Hillston – frying an egg for charity

During the January heat wave the lunchtime drinkers at the Tatt's Hotel engaged in a wager. Wally 'the worker' bet it was hot enough to fry an egg on the metal grating over the gutter outside the hotel. He not only fried the egg, but ate it and raised \$20 for Can Assist!

- Jenny Rose, Hillston Secretary/Contact Assist

Glen Innes Fundraising Committee – dancing the night away to support local cancer patients

It was a wonderful night with 110 people attending. The music was fantastic and we danced the night away. We raised around \$4,000 so it was very successful, had a great auction of goods, and 3 local auctioneers that made it a lot of fun.

- Maryn Burgess, Glen Innes Fundraising Committee



Your View

Wagga Wagga – Gumi Race

On February 17, 2013, for the first time in history, Can Assist Wagga Wagga entered a raft in the World Championship Gumi Race from Eunony Bridge to the iconic Wagga Beach to raise the community profile of our branch. The branch entered in the last race of the day, the Odd Bodd's Event (the title seemed most appropriate), and completed the 7 kilometre down stream course in 1 hour and 50 minutes coming third in our division out of 12 entrants. After the first 500 metres, the raft started to lean badly, so President Donna Cavanagh and Kelli Burmeister had to change sides without getting off the raft and without capsizing us. They achieved the manoeuvre with the raft taking on minimal water and Owen Smith and Adele Kerr leaning wildly over the side as a counter balance.

The raft was built by Owen, with materials being bought, borrowed and scrounged and was designed, so that the Can Assist Banner could be shown along its length and be seen by the spectators on the bank. We received a lot of waves and yahoos on our down stream journey. Now that we are seasoned Gumi Race participants, we will be back to defend our third place title in 2014.

Cheers

Owen (Treasurer) and Donna (President)



In the News

Country Cancer Rescue

On Friday 31st May Can Assist Sydney held its annual fundraising lunch, Country Cancer Rescue, at the Waterfront restaurant, Circular Quay. Funds raised on the day totaled \$140,000 – making it our most successful fundraising lunch yet! Some of these funds will cover the cost of the lunch but the bulk of the money raised will be used to assist people from rural and regional NSW to access cancer treatment in Sydney so they will not have to worry about finding extra money for accommodation and care.

We were delighted to have so many state politicians attend the lunch: Deputy Premier and State National's leader Andrew Stoner, who is also Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services and is from Kempsey; Melinda Pavey, Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Health; Deputy Speaker Thomas George, Member for Lismore; Daryl Maguire, Member for Wagga Wagga; Troy Grant, Member for Dubbo; Gareth Ward, Member for Kiama; Tanya Davies, Member for Mulgoa; Leslie Williams, Member for Port Macquarie, and from city electorates, Gabrielle Upton, Member for Vaucluse and Melanie Gibbons, Member for Menai. Their presence is a significant comment on the respect with which Can Assist is held.

We were also delighted to have 13 guests who are current cancer patients or carers staying at Quest. These guests are in Sydney for treatment and come from places as far afield as Lightning Ridge, Tumbarumba, Murrurundi, Mudgee, Tamworth, Narromine and Merimbula and as close as Newcastle. Their presence reminds us of Can Assist's founding purpose – to provide accommodation for country cancer patients.

Perhaps the highlight for our 230 lunch guests was when president Kay Hull joined Rosemary O'Farrell, the Premier's wife, on stage as impromptu back up dancers to Patron John Colvin's duet with Nyngan's most famous entertainer Royden "Elvis" Donohue singing "Viva Las Vegas".

Can Assist warmly thanks the generous people, organisations and corporations in Sydney who believe, like us, that access to the best possible health care is a right for all people, not just those who live in a city.

BOF's wife can dance for charity



STILL on showgirls, Premier **Barry O'Farrell** is married to one. BOF's better-looking half, **Rosemary**, attended a fundraiser for cancer support charity Can Assist at the Waterfront restaurant on Friday. She danced with federal Nationals MP **Kay Hull** and Elvis impersonator **Royden Donohue**, helping to raise \$6000. Alas, BOF was not there. "I wish I'd been there," he said.

Right: Article in Sydney's Sunday Telegraph on 2 June, page 118.

Gallery



Above: Premier's wife Rosemary O'Farrell, Patron John Colvin, Elvis impersonator Royden Donohue and President Kay Hull on stage at Country Cancer Rescue.



Above left: MC Angela Catterns with Royden Donohue.
Above right: Can Assist Sydney Accommodation Service guests and carers.