



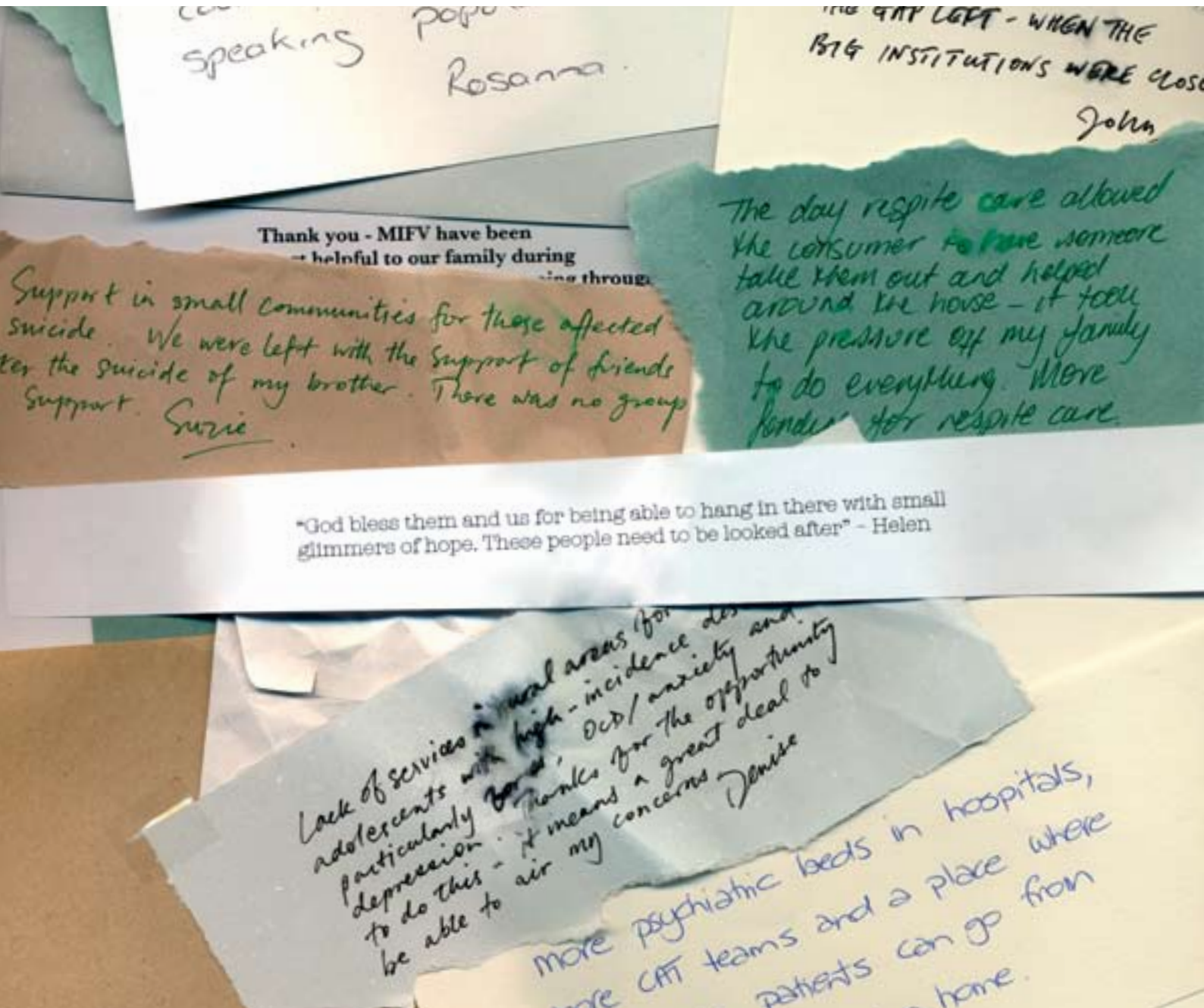
For people with a mental illness,
their families and friends

mivoice

Autumn 2006 No. 101

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MI Advocacy – making our voices heard.





From the Chief Executive

I want to give my personal thanks to each of you who so generously responded to our election advocacy strategy. The initial collation of responses and the issues identified are reported in this edition of MI Voice. But data collection and analysis does not convey the very personal and reflective accounts that you shared with us. They are extremely moving. They underline just how much work there is to be done to achieve MI Fellowship's vision of a society in which mental illness will be understood and accepted and in which the long-term negative consequences of mental illness will have disappeared for people with mental illness and their families.

In the last edition I relayed the story of a woman who was attempting to get prescription medication for her daughter administered. I asked if there were other people who had experienced increased costs associated with medications. Many of you in your responses to the election advocacy campaign identified the costs of prescription medications as an issue.

A number of letters have raised the issue of the narrow diagnostic criteria applied to medications for PBS subsidised pricing. A letter to the editor published in this edition describes one such case.

Along with the issues prioritised by you through responses to our election advocacy campaign, the issue of the cost of medications is firmly on our agenda.

Major Sam Cochran from Memphis police is our guest for the annual Bruce Woodcock memorial lecture on May 16th this year. As well as the lecture, we will have Sam meet with senior police and mental health officials and other important stakeholders. The aim of these meetings is to lobby for a way forward to ensure more consistent outcomes for people with a mental illness and their families at a time of crisis. We are determined to work to create an environment where everybody's safety, particularly that of people with a mental illness and families, is ensured.

We are most fortunate too to have renowned ABC journalist Fran Kelly reflecting on changing attitudes to mental health in the media and the Australian community. Fran will also facilitate a discussion between John Mendoza, CEO of the Mental Health Council of Australia and Rob Knowles, President of MI Fellowship Victoria, about the adaptability of the Memphis model to the Victorian and Australian contexts.

Your attendance at the Woodcock Lecture will help us to build community support to ensure we achieve a better outcome for all. I look forward to seeing you there.

Elizabeth Crowther

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O'Meara House

Anne, an O'Meara House guest. September 2005

*O'Meara House,
The place to be,
What friends to make,
For you and me!*

*You may join in,
Or rest a while,
But guaranteed
You'll find a smile.*

*The meals are great,
The house is a treat,
Surroundings clean –
And fresh and neat.*

*Such things to do,
That are so great,
Such fun to have –
With your new mates.*

*The staff are beaut,
They really care,
We matter, yes –
They're always there.*

*No better place –
Can I recall,
To stay a while,
And have a ball.*

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News bites

Volunteer Simone at Big Day Out



- Congratulations to the staff and participants of The Garage, Wonthaggi for receiving the Good Access is Good Business Award 2005. This award was for organisations in South Gippsland as part of International Disability Day. The Garage was recognised for providing good physical access to buildings and treating people with dignity and respect.
- MI Fellowship again had an information stall at Big Day Out, an annual music event, attracting thousands of

young people. Staff and volunteers answered questions, distributed brochures, sold caps and wristbands and surveyed young people on their awareness of mental illness.

- MI Resource Centre is now open on Fridays, thanks to an expanding list of volunteers. The hours of operation are now Tuesday and Wednesday 10am - 4pm and Friday 10am - 1pm.

A Cause to Create

Left: Elizabeth Crowther with The Hon Jeff Kennett

Right: Event organizers (from left) Sarah, Paula and Anna



An eclectic crowd gathered on Thursday 23 February for a fantastic new event, 'A Cause to Create'. The event was organised by a group of young people who are known as 'Five for Life', based on the statistic that one in five Australians are affected by mental illness. Paula Firtl came up with the idea and formed a terrific support team to make the event happen. "It's so great to see it all come together tonight and to have people talking so openly about mental illness. That was our whole aim, to get people talking and raise awareness" said Paula on the night. After months of hard work, the event came off without a hitch and included speeches from The Hon. Jeff Kennett and our own Elizabeth Crowther.

The event was MC'd by Kate Kendall, star of Channel Nine's 'Stingers' program and a host of other Australian productions. The event raised \$6847, which was split evenly between MI Fellowship and BeyondBlue. Elizabeth thanked the group on the night, saying "this is the culmination of months of hard work and for that, we are so grateful. It's wonderful to see a young, passionate group of Victorians commit to raising awareness and funds for mental illness, and to mobilising their networks, contacts, friends, work mates and family into really thinking about how mental illness affects us all." Our thanks again to this group of hard working people who have achieved an amazing result.

If you're inspired by the 'Five for Life' group and would like to do some fundraising of your own for MI Fellowship, please contact Joanne Luciani or Stephanie Puls on 03 8486 4200.

Snapshots

Fiona Fitzgerald is a member, volunteer and former casual staff member of MI Fellowship. Fiona generously shares her experiences with us.

My experience at Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria

Fiona Fitzgerald

After becoming unwell with acute anxiety, psychosis and depression, (who ever said Schizoaffective Disorder was fun!?) I had spent my time in hospital and taking a new medication for a few months. But there still remained the hardest, seemingly impossible part, social readjustment. I wondered where to turn after this, my second major episode of mental illness since diagnosis some 10 years ago.

Living with my parents, I spent afternoons on the telephone desperately trying to connect to recreation-type groups, as I knew I could not yet work. I hadn't really found anywhere to go to feel 'useful'. That was, until my sister suggested volunteer work at a place she'd heard of, Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria, affectionately now known to me as MI Fellowship.

With her every other suggestion of volunteer work, I convinced myself I would be hopeless, and could not do it....my self-esteem was so low. I felt that people would not understand my instability, and lack of ability to concentrate for very long. But at a place supporting mental illness, that there was no denying I had... that might be different.

I started volunteer work in the Library at MI Fellowship in September 2004, as I have tertiary training in the Library field. On my first day, I will never forget how the then Volunteer Co-ordinator, Julie Mehegan, took me aside to "sit down for a little while" as I was confused about what was going on. It was, in hindsight, a great feeling to have that empathy shown on the first day.

Bit by bit, coming into the Library one day a week to volunteer, I was given the opportunity to get back into the swing of things and meet some exceptionally inspiring people. Not only Julie, but also the wonderfully kind and patient acting Librarian, Bill Royston and Library team, and pillars of strength and good humour, Bernadette Doyle and Gerard Reed.

At Open Mind Fiesta 2004 I found out about the Northcote Op Shop, led by Margaret Darby. It seemed like a fun thing to volunteer there as well so I joined the Op Shop team, working there one day a week. In my time at the Op Shop, I learnt that it IS possible to work AND have fun! I made some good friends there and was actually starting to feel happy - a stark contrast to the crying for hours of each day and feeling 'out of my skin' so much of the time in the previous months. I think now that feeling comfortable in one's own skin is a major sign of being well.

My confidence with people generally was returning and I was feeling much better about myself. I took up some work delivering local newspapers and catalogues for some extra money on top of my Disability Support Pension, as well as something to fill in the two days I wasn't volunteering at MI Fellowship.

It is now a year and 3 months since I started volunteering at MI Fellowship. I have done the three hour course in 'understanding Mental Illness', which I highly recommend and, in the later part of 2005, I have enjoyed being employed in reception at Fairfield Place, with much thanks to the training and encouragement of the other receptionist, Cheryl Scott.

I have now started a job in my career field as Library Technician, working four days per week in a not-for-profit organisation, such is my enthusiasm in this work sector.

I feel recovered from my last episode, which was brought about by stress, taking too many things on, and the biological part of my brain which needs my medication to keep 'stuck together', needing an update. I am aware that I still have an illness, but now feel much better equipped and empowered by the things I have learnt along the way.

They are, to summarise:

- Learn your limitations and know what is good for your own well-being. This is unique for everyone.
- Don't put too much pressure on yourself to do too much.
- Wherever possible, do not rush things.
- Exercise regularly, as well as taking your medication and;
- BE KIND TO YOURSELF!!

I want to say a big thank you to all the staff at MI Fellowship for their support, encouragement and inspiration. Their warm and friendly professionalism has been a major part of recovery for me. I also count myself lucky to have had family support (and a place to live) when currently there are many people suffering mental illness who have to make returns to hospital, due to lack of support.

I also want to say to others reading this that mental illness need not be an 'end', as it can seem when you're in the middle of it, as a carer or consumer. Hang in there. With help, from MI Fellowship, a psychiatrist, family and/or friends, as well as your own unique things (for me piano playing and some meditation), it can be an opportunity for growth and adjustment - a way to learn for times ahead.

People & their stories

Members indicated they were keen to hear the stories of carers, as well as people with mental illness. In this edition, Danielle's mother Anne generously shares her story with us.



One in five people suffer a mental illness and it happened in our family.

It has been twelve months since our daughter had a psychotic episode, later diagnosed as depression. The psychosis was like the bursting of a boil. We had felt concerned because she wasn't sleeping well, had withdrawn from her friends and didn't want to pursue her university studies to their conclusion. Could it be depression? Her older sister accompanied her to our family GP who recommended she get more exercise.

She experienced her psychosis one evening which manifested itself with delusions that we, her parents, were vampires and she was afraid of us and feeling she was going to die but also aware that she wasn't well and asking us to get help.

From our first request for help when we rang nearby Austin Hospital, we have become aware of the help available for our daughter and us. Our experiences of mental health professionals have all been positive. The CAT team visits to our home were holistic, treating her symptoms and informing us about her treatment and strategies to help her.

Following her stabilisation that took two weeks with visits of decreasing frequency from the CAT team as she progressed from critical care, we moved on to attending the North Eastern Mental Health Service where she attended according to need. She was given a case worker, visiting him regularly. We were then advised to get a referral from our GP to a private psychiatrist who she is still attending and who has given her strategies for living with depression and medication.

As well as our daughter attending a "consumer's" group of other young people who also suffer a mental illness, we attend a carers' group. We find this group wonderful. As well as speakers who raise our awareness of mental health issues, it is where we can share how life is for us with people who really understand what we are going through. We find them inspiring and affirming and although it may seem amazing, we have a really good laugh during these sessions.

What is most important to us is that help is available and that we have hope while accepting the reality of our daughter living with depression. It's hard for me not to be a 'helicopter' parent always hovering but we do our best, giving ourselves a break from the wondering and making time to enjoy life.

5.

Park Bench[®] Observations of Daily life



Created by Peter Barker 'Park Bench' is a cartoon series, looking at life and social issues, provided by Peter Barker, who has lived with schizophrenia for over twenty years.

Sponsorship

Given digital technology these days, the difference in cost between a black and white publication and a colour publication is not so large. Nevertheless, we are seeking sponsors for each edition of MI Voice through 2006. Our faithful printer 'Print Impressions' has generously donated the difference in cost for the next two editions.

If you would like to sponsor an edition or know of someone who might, please contact us. We would be happy to speak with you. Business sponsors are welcome to advertise their business. We hope you enjoy the new look! The editor. Phone: 03 8486 4200 Email: spuls@mifellowship.org


PRINT
IMPRESSIONS

To contact Trevor at Print Impressions phone: 9887 0733

Middletons

middletons
lawyers

Middletons are one of MI Fellowship's key partners, who provide ongoing pro bono legal support for our work. Middletons is a leading Australian commercial

law firm servicing clients nationally and internationally.

The association started with Tom Molomby, whose law firm Molomby and Molomby first provided pro bono advice to the then Schizophrenia Fellowship of Victoria. Molomby and Molomby merged with Middletons in 1998 and Kevin Abrahamson, a lawyer working with Tom, moved over to Middletons and has continued to advise MI Fellowship in his new role there as Special Counsel.

Kevin provided specialist advice when Schizophrenia Fellowship of Victoria changed its name to Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria and became a company limited by guarantee. Middletons were also foundation partners in developing MI Fellowship's social firm, The Flat Bottle Company, which continues to assist with devising innovative employment strategies for people with mental illness. "Mental illness is an area that professionals should continue to support. It's very worthwhile, producing real results and benefits. The Flat Bottle Company is a terrific example of that" said Kevin, who also worked on establishing the social firm management group and got them tax exemption and 'deductible gift recipient' (DGR) status from the ATO.

Middletons have continued to review, update and change our constitution to meet changing legal and environmental requirements. They provide support and advice on individual projects as they arise and have committed to an ongoing pro bono relationship by way of support from senior counsel. They continue to support the development of strategic partnerships and generously provide facilities for various MI Fellowship events.

On behalf of Middletons, Kevin has also done pro bono work for Mental Illness Fellowship Australia (MIFA), including getting DGR status for them. Kevin believes that doing this pro bono work for MI Fellowship Victoria and MIFA is a "practical and very meaningful way of providing the support that people with a mental illness need".

Our thanks again to Kevin Abrahamson and Middletons for their ongoing support of MI Fellowship.

President's column



I'd like to take this opportunity to thank members for being so generous with your time in responding to our latest advocacy mail-out.

We had an overwhelming response, both in numbers and content. It's clear that there are many issues bubbling under the surface that require urgent action. The responses included a vast range of issues, with an interesting mix of 'priorities'. The issue most frequently listed as your number one priority was that of support at critical times. CAT Teams, Community Treatment Orders, involuntary treatment, treatment planning, lack of hospital beds and lack of access to information and support were among the most frequently mentioned 'problem areas' in your responses. The issue with the second highest number one rating was that of appropriate housing, where members frequently mentioned the issues of support and supervision. Following these two issues were that of ongoing support (provision of PDRS) and carer/family support. Other issues raised include the cost of medication, difficulty negotiating confidentiality and family involvement, employment and access to psychologists and psychiatrists.

I'm pleased that in this edition, the mother of our regular columnist Danielle is writing for us from a carer's perspective. Members indicated they would like to hear stories from carers, so we're delighted that Anne Cotter has generously shared her experiences with us here.

I would also like to thank those of you who have provided feedback on our new-look MI Voice publication. We're continuing to incorporate your suggestions and make improvements, as you will see in this Autumn edition. Please continue to send feedback and suggestions to membership@mifellowship.org.

Rob Knowles

2006 MI Fellowship Awards – Nominate now!



2004 Volunteer of the Year, Matthew Sitters, hard at work.

Each year the Mental Illness Fellowship Awards recognise the outstanding contribution made by individuals to improving the wellbeing of people with a mental illness, their families and friends.

Our Awards present an opportunity for members to nominate people they know who make a difference to the lives of people affected by mental illness. Please consider nominating someone you know who works hard at inclusion and bringing about change for people affected by mental illness. The Awards will be presented at the Annual General Meeting on Friday 20 October 2006.

The Award categories are as follows:

Annual Awards

Mental Illness Fellowship Award

Awarded to a volunteer, participant or carer associated with the Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria, for their outstanding contribution to participants and/or carers in MI Fellowship programs.

Mental Health Community Award

Awarded to a person working in the general community, for their outstanding service to people living with a mental illness or carers of people with a mental illness.

Volunteer of the Year Award

Awarded to a volunteer for outstanding contributions to MI Fellowship.

Non-annual awards and recognition

O'Meara Award

The O'Meara Award is MI Fellowship's Award for individuals who have made an outstanding and extraordinary contribution to the Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria over many years, in areas such as development of the organisation, advocacy or another significant area. It is not an annual award due to its prestigious nature. The award is named after John O'Meara, the organisation's first president. In recognition, the person receives Honorary Life Membership of MI Fellowship.

Blickle Award

The Blickle Award is MI Fellowship's Award for individuals who have made sustained impact on the development of the mental health field outside of MI Fellowship. It will typically be somebody who is well known for their work in the mental health field who has made significant impact on the lives of people with a mental illness or the family members over a sustained period of time. It is not an annual award due to its prestigious nature. The award is named after Jurgen Blickle of SEW-Eurodrive, a key supporter of MI Fellowship. In recognition, the person receives Honorary Life Membership of MI Fellowship.

Nomination forms are available from www.mifellowship.org/newsevents.asp or by calling Fairfield Place on 03 8486 4200. Nominations must be made before 25 August 2006.

Mental Illness Family Support and Education Schedule

Well Ways: A travellers's guide to wellbeing for families and friends of people with mental illness.

The Well Ways program consists of eight 3hr weekly group education sessions plus follow-up workshops over 12 months.

Where: Fairfield

When: Friday 10am-1pm commencing 5 May

Where: Heidelberg

When: Wednesday 6.30-9.30pm commencing 10 May

Where: Ringwood

When: Thursday 6.30-9.30pm commencing 25 May

Where: Sunshine

When: Thursday 6.30-9.30pm commencing July 27

Double Trouble: A support and information program for families and friends of people with dual diagnosis (mental illness and substance abuse) The Double Trouble program consists of six - 3hr weekly group education sessions

Where: Fairfield

When: Thursday mornings, commencing July 13

Understanding Mental Illness Workshops

Where: MI Fellowship, Fairfield Place, 276 Heidelberg Rd, Fairfield.

When: 9.30am June 8; 6.30pm August 16; 9.30am October 4; 6.30pm November 9.

For more information about any of these programs or to book, please call 03 8486 4200 or email enquiries@mifellowship.org

Letters to the editor

Dear Editor

As a long time reader of MI Voice I just wanted to congratulate you on the new look of the newsletter. For the first time I read the issue from cover to cover in one sitting.

It is so much easier to read and I love the larger photos.

There is a lot to be said for having a well designed layout to make information accessible. Keep up the good work!

Egle Findlay

Dear Editor

Just a quick note to say I thought the last edition of MI Voice was fabulous and a vast improvement on the orange and yellows of the old style. It was a delight to read - congratulations. It's quality!

(Name and address supplied)

Dear Editor

I wondered if I could draw your attention to the matter of the issues that surround a medication called Seroquel and its restricted availability at an affordable price for patients prescribed this medication.

I suffer from depression and take Lovan. At night I take Seroquel as a sleep medication. I was able to have Seroquel for long time at the Rebated Subsidized price, \$3.80 at the time. For the past 18 months however, I have had be issued a 'private script' by my treating psychiatrist, as there has been an issue arise where psychiatrists are fined and/or audited if they are prescribing Seroquel for patients who do not fit its strict 'criteria' and anti-psychotic qualification. I come in to this group and so I pay \$300 per script for 60 tablets of 300mg at night.

This is a huge difference to what I was able to get it for as it is not on the PBS. My circumstances have not changed regarding my pension or ability to pay this amount, and my chemist supplies them at cost at this price. If I went to any other chemist, I would be paying up to \$360 for the same amount. Due to a number of other medical conditions I have, I am limited in the alternatives that might otherwise be tried to remove this terrible price issue.

I would be most grateful if you could raise this issue and bring it to the attention of the decision-makers and decision-breakers.

Thank you for your time and attention to this letter.

Angela (name and address supplied)

* This letter has been edited.

A MI Challenger enjoying China after the Great Wall trek.



MI Challenge – an experience to last a life time

**Take on a challenge to walk the Great Wall of China
5-17 May 2007 OR**

**Participate in the Amazing Race across Asia
10-23 March 2007.**

In the process help raise much needed funds for Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria.

We are looking for people of all ages and walks of life to take part in these two unique adventures. You'll be part of a team of 20-30 people raising money and awareness for the work of MI Fellowship whilst having the adventure of a lifetime and meeting many great new people!

How do the MI Challenges work?

Register for either challenge and pay a registration fee of \$500 and then fundraise \$5000 to support MI Fellowship. This includes all airfares, guides, transport, accommodation and food. There are no hidden costs. There are various ways you can pay for the challenge – ask us how! Never fundraised before?... Don't worry, there will be plenty of support along the way.

Come along & find out more about this exciting event at a free information session. For more information or to reserve your place at the next information session please call Chris Harrison on 0423 780 716 or e-mail charrison@memorablechallenges.com

Challenge yourself to make a difference this year!
<http://www.mifellowship.org/michallenge.asp>

Securing our future – a bequest program

A bequest will ensure that you share in and make real MI Fellowship's vision. Once you have secured the future of your family, please consider this lasting gift.

Members and supporters of Mental Illness Fellowship have always been very generous and giving. To support non-government funded programs such as family support and education courses, advocacy and community awareness campaigns, MI Fellowship raises funds in many different ways, through the support of our members and donors to our various appeals, corporate and organisational contributions, raffle campaigns, grants from philanthropic trusts and foundations, special events and bequests.

MI Fellowship has received several bequests, ranging from very small to substantial, which have been directed to significant projects. However, bequests can be a sensitive subject in families where resources are tight or where there are significant estate planning issues to be considered for family members who may require future security.

MI Fellowship respects this sensitivity and the need for families to ensure the future of loved ones. However, bequests are an important part of the overall funding mix of an organisation which relies so heavily on the support of its constituents.

Some families and individuals, once they have secured the future of their family, may have the capacity to commit a proportion of their estate to MI Fellowship to share our vision. In the coming months, MI Fellowship will be commencing a formal bequests program, with the first step being the mailing of information to members and supporters. Respecting the sensitivity of this subject, we would like to ensure that you have the opportunity to opt out of this program and not receive our brochure, letter or information about our bequest program. If you would prefer not to be part of this program or have already made provision for a bequest in your will, please contact Joanne on 8486 4250 or Verity on 8486 4256 and ask for your name to be excluded from the mailing list.

A bequest will ensure that you share in and make real MI Fellowship's vision. Once you have secured the future of your family, please consider this lasting gift.

For further information about MI Fellowship Bequest Program or Fundraising in general, please contact Joanne Luciani, Fundraising Coordinator on 8486 4250 or email jluciani@mifellowship.org

9.

Dates for your diary – 2006

Schizophrenia Awareness Week – 14-21 May

8th Woodcock Memorial Lecture – 6 pm, Tuesday 16 May

The 14th car raffle draw (Autumn) – Thursday 15 June

Nominations for Awards close – Friday 25 August

Nominations for Board of Directors close – Friday 1 Sept

Mental Health Week – 8-15 October

Open Mind Fiesta – Sunday 15 October

AGM, Awards and Annual Lecture – Friday 20 October

Volunteer thank you party – 4pm, Thursday 30 November

Please find out more about all activities by calling 03 8486 4200 or visit www.mifellowship.org/newsevents.asp



MI Glass Creations

- Supported by the Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria

An experienced retired person is requested as a Volunteer to fill a Sales role 2-3 days per week.

More than one person can share this role working in different market sectors.

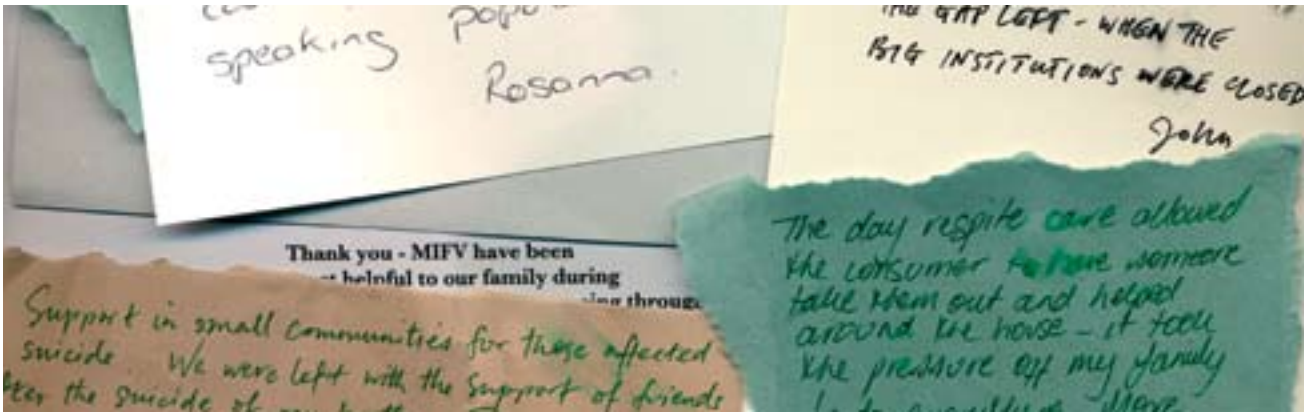
Trade and wholesale sales experience is preferred.

Use of email and some understanding of graphics would be useful but not essential.

For more information call Naomi – 8486 4200

Mental Health Issues for State Election – member survey results

Some of our advocacy campaign responses, also featured on front cover



At the time of writing, almost 200 handwritten responses have been forwarded to us outlining what you believe are the major issues that should be pitched to election candidates at this year's November State election.

The vast majority of responses documented at least their top four issues, so we have more than 600 articulated issues.

This is an outstanding result and gives us an enormous opportunity to represent our concerns and to proffer solutions. Of course everyone articulates issues slightly differently, but clear shared areas of concern certainly emerged when we put together the data. We have only had the opportunity to do an initial analysis.

The top **8** areas of concern articulated, in order, were:

1. Clinical care and treatment planning; **2.** Appropriate housing; **3.** Ongoing non-clinical support; **4.** Employment; **5.** Family/Carer support; **6.** Cost of medications; **7.** Access to psychiatrists/psychologists; **8.** Confidentiality.

1. Clinical care and treatment planning is a broad category but within it, early discharge figured prominently and lack of discharge planning. Of all solutions proffered, many people suggested that a tiered level of care is necessary, acute inpatient care, some sort of transitional care between hospital and home, and then ongoing care at home.

Many people expressed that discharge planning was too disorganised and so often the burden of care was left to families and the lack of coordinated service led to the 'revolving door' syndrome. The next most prominent issue in this category was the inadequate response in times of crisis – the inability to access timely responses from CAT teams.

2. Appropriate housing was the second most common issue – many positive solutions came among the concerns, but there was widespread agreement that there was an overall lack of accommodation options and that often accommodation offered (if at all) took a long time to access or was inappropriate. Many members commented on the need for tailored support – the issue is not just a roof over someone's head, but about adequate and appropriate support to make it work, including skills development.
3. Ongoing non-clinical support is the next broad category. This includes skills development for everyday living, the need for social networks, education, dealing with residual symptoms, financial management skills, and dealing with guilt and self-esteem. Commonly, members spoke of the impact that a lack of services had on families. Many people spoke of the lack of meaning, the lack of a future, and the isolation that many people with mental illness were left in, as a result of inadequate support.
4. Employment rated as the fourth most common issue. Most people expressed a belief that their loved one with a mental illness had the capacity to work (at least to some extent) but that there were simply no employment opportunities. There was widespread agreement that this contributes greatly to isolation and feelings of meaninglessness. Many members commented that welfare dependence and a financial dependence on other family members was the result. There were also many comments that prevocational programs were not offering pathways to employment and often contributed to further despair when they did not result in any employment opportunities.

Our sincere thanks to all of you who took the time to put pen to paper. It has given us an opportunity to present a very strong case in the lead-up to the state election. We will be in touch again soon with a strategy to roll out and maximise the opportunity. Your continued individual contributions will be vital to this process.

Following a winning script



Imagine for a moment if you received a phone call advising you had won a prize. These days the first thought is that it is one of those pesky telemarketing calls! Imagine though that as the conversation proceeds you find out you have won first prize in a raffle and that prize is a brand new car. What would your first words be?

Well, Lesley, who won a lovely VW Golf Trendline in our latest Spring Raffle certainly followed the script. Lesley's reaction went from "Are you sure?" to "You're not pulling my leg, are you?" to "That's wonderful!" – a reaction which has been

Below: Raffle winner Lesley, pictured with her daughter, collecting her prize

pretty much followed since our first raffle. It is one of the great pleasures of coordinating a raffles program to listen to winners' sense of wonderment once they realize they have indeed been so lucky.

A truly delightful winner, Lesley has plans for the car which fulfil a life-long dream and MI Fellowship is happy to assist her achieve her dreams and goals. "I feel truly blessed having been given this opportunity," Lesley said when presented with her prize after travelling from her home in Shepparton. And in keeping with scripted responses, most of Lesley's friends have responded to her win with "it is great to actually know someone who has won a raffle" – a very familiar refrain from family and friends of winners!

Our thanks to all supporters and to Evanthea at Camberwell Volkswagen, who continue their long-term support of MI Fellowship.

MI Fellowship's Autumn Raffle is now underway, with the prize being a trendy Toyota RAV 4. If you would like to test our winner's reaction script, why not buy a ticket – it could be you asking those same questions. To help our fundraising efforts, please consider selling a small book of tickets. Regular supporters should have received their small allocations by now. If you would also like to participate, please call Joanne or Verity on 8486 4200.

This lecture is a key event of Schizophrenia Awareness Week

Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria presents

Crisis Intervention: Making Partnerships Work

Major Sam Cochran from the Memphis Police Department, Tennessee, USA is a passionate advocate for people with a mental illness. He has been instrumental in revolutionizing response to psychiatric crisis in Memphis and building partnerships among all stakeholders. Major Cochran will describe the model and key issues in its development. Major Cochran is a 2005 sponsored national guest speaker.

Dr. SUZIE HENNINGER, Fran Kelly, respected journalist and host of ABC's Radio National breakfast program, will facilitate a discussion between Sam Cochran, **John Woodcock** CEO, Mental Health Council of Australia and **Rob Knowles** (President, Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria) about the applicability of the model in the Victorian and Australian contexts.

Sponsored by **Stony Creek** and **MI Fellowship Victoria**

Tuesday 18th May 06
5.45pm for 6pm start
BMW Edge Theatre
Federation Square, Melbourne
Reservations & enquiries -
P 03 8486 4200 or
E enquiries@mfivictoria.org
MI Fellowship Members - free
Others - gold coin donation
www.mifellowship.org

the 8th Bruce Woodcock Memorial Lecture

Staff and their stories



Cheryl Scott

- 1. What's your role at MI Fellowship?**
Receptionist (Monday – Wednesday)
- 2. What's your favourite part of your role?**
Meeting people through my job
- 3. Where have you worked prior to this role?**
As a receptionist for a doctors clinic and part time cleaning on weekends for 15 years
- 4. If you could say one thing to members, what would it be?**
With your support we can make a difference
- 5. What are you reading at the moment?**
Any magazine
- 6. What's your most treasured possession?**
Definitely my treadmill
- 7. In one word, describe the essence of MI Fellowship?** Caring

