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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair Ron Kingsbury

Vice Chair Gail Haidon

Secretary & Public Officer Karen Noble

Members Wayne Simpson
Leonie Regan
Ron Jelleff
Chin Wong
Damian Caesary
Tyler Ellis

STAFF

Executive Director Paul Bartholomew
Senior CoOrdinator Joanne Read

Area **CoOrdinators**
Belconnen Jenny Pegram/Chris Davies (Job share)

**Woden, Weston Creek
& Tuggeranong** Tracey Child/Natasha West (Job share)

City North & City South Jeni McLelland/Derryth Nash (Job share)

LeisureLink Program Manager Elaine Swain
Finance Program Manager Pat Leifsson
**Administration Officer,
Payroll & Accounts** Pat Leifsson, Yin Cheng, Maria Morson
Roster Clerk/Training CoOrdinator Pernille Rosenkilde-Schuler
Volunteer Office Assistant Joanne Kingsbury
Computer Consultants Mr Dick Lang, Rebyte
Andrew Magnussen, Holder Help Desk
Honorary Solicitors Bradley Allen Lawyers
Auditors Everall, DFK & Associates
Certified Practising Accountants

OVERVIEW OF THE ORGANISATION

The Association and Its Activities

Respite Care ACT Inc. has been an incorporated association in the ACT since 1989. It is a not-for-profit community based organisation providing a range of in-home support services to frail older people, people with a disability, people with mental health issues and their carers.

The organisation employs 15 administration and service coordination staff (8.7 full time equivalent positions) and 120 casual support workers. Service to clients of the LeisureLink program has been provided by 31 volunteers.

Funds used to provide services are obtained through service funding agreements between Respite Care ACT and the ACT Department of Health, and the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services. Services are also provided to clients on a fee for service basis primarily through brokerage from other non government organisations.

Mission

To enhance the independence and quality of life of people with disabilities, frail older people, people with mental health issues and their primary carers through the provision of in-home support and community support.

Aims

To provide:

- In-home and community based support to frail older people, people with a disability, people with mental health issues and their carers through high quality service which will be client-centred and directed at meeting client goals;
- A flexible and innovative approach in the planning and delivery of individualised support;
- Accessible service to all eligible members of the community without discrimination.

Management

The direction and management of Respite Care ACT Inc. is vested in the voluntary Board of Directors that is elected by members annually. The implementation of Respite Care ACT services is the responsibility of the Executive Director and the staff members.

Chairman's Report

Over the past year Respite Care ACT has continued to uphold its deserved reputation for providing high quality services to our clients and their family carers through our dedicated support workers, coordinators and administrative staff. In addition, our LeisureLink program continues to provide a highly valued friendly visiting service through our group of committed volunteers.

At our last Annual General Meeting, held in November 2006, we were very fortunate that all of our existing Board members agreed to continue for another year. In addition, one of our clients, Tyler Ellis, was elected as a new Board member. It is very pleasing that we now have two of our clients, Damian Caesar and Tyler Ellis, on the Respite Care Board.

There have been a number of key staff changes during the year. In July, Jenny Pegram resigned from her position as a coordinator with Respite Care ACT after some 11 years with this organisation. Her experience and guidance will be greatly missed. Amongst Jenny's achievements has been the development and implementation of our Living Skills program which assists selected clients to develop or regain functional skills to increase their level of independence. We also farewelled Ying Cheng from her Payroll and Accounts Officer position and Shirley Clarke from her Receptionist/Office Manager role. I wish to welcome Maria Morson as our new Payroll and Accounts Officer and welcome back Natasha West to her coordinator position after her period of maternity leave. My thanks also to Louise Silver and Von Tobin who helped out in our Receptionist position for a number of months.

The major development of the last 12 months was the announcement in April 2007 by myself, as Chairperson of Respite Care ACT, and Catherine McPherson, as President of FaBRiC, that the Boards of the two organisations had agreed to pursue a merger. This decision was taken by the Boards after reviewing strong evidence to indicate that a merger of the two organisations will create a stronger entity that is better equipped to provide quality services to our clients and meet the challenges of the future.

We have given an assurance that no client or staff member will be disadvantaged by a merger and that the integrity of all programs will be maintained. All clients and staff will be kept fully informed as we progress the planning for this proposed merger.

It is envisaged that this merger proposal will be taken to the Annual General Meetings of both organisations in October 2007. Provided members accept the proposal, it is envisaged that the new entity will commence on 1 January 2008.

Our Board was also very pleased during the year to be part of the launch of the Respite Care Client Holiday Scheme. We are grateful for the sponsorship received from the Calwell and Wanniasa Community Bank Branches of Bendigo Bank to support this exciting and very welcome initiative.

Our thanks to John Mann and his team at Everalls DFK & Associates for auditing services for the year. We are also very grateful to ACT Health and the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services for their ongoing financial support and goodwill. My sincere thanks to all Board members, office staff, coordinators, support workers and volunteers for their continuing commitment to providing the best possible quality service to all of our clients and their families.

Finally, my special thanks to Paul Bartholomew our very popular, able and diligent Executive Director who has decided to leave Canberra to live on the North Coast of New South Wales. Paul will be sadly missed not only by Respite Care ACT but by the community sector generally in the ACT. His wise counsel and assistance to our organisation over the past four years is greatly appreciated.

Ron Kingsbury, OAM
CHAIRPERSON

Executive Director's Report

Overview

It is my pleasure to present my report for the period 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007.

During 2006/07 Respite Care ACT provided approximately 60,000 hours of in-home and community support to frail aged people, people with a disability, people with mental health issues and their family carers in the ACT. Our LeisureLink program provided a further 2,400 hours of support through our dedicated group of volunteers.

We have successfully met all of the financial and output requirements of our Home and Community Care program, Disability Services program and Mental Health program Service Funding Agreements for 2006/07. We are very grateful to the ACT Government for this ongoing financial support.

A major initiative during the year was the Respite Care Open Day that was held on 11 October 2006 in the grounds of the Respite Care office. We are grateful to the ACT Government for the funding we received through the Canberra Community Grants Scheme for this Open Day. The event was a great success with more than 100 people in attendance. We were very fortunate to have the presence of Katy Gallagher, the Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Disability and Community Services to officially launch the new Respite Care logo and website (www.respite.org.au) and to also celebrate the 10th anniversary of arranging in-home support from our Holder office.

At this Open Day, the Minister also announced the name of the first participant in the new Respite Care Client Holiday Scheme. This exciting program aims to give a number of Respite Care clients each year the opportunity to enjoy a holiday outside the ACT with the paid assistance of their support worker. These are people who live on a disability pension, who receive a high level of support and who would rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to go on a holiday.

In July 2006, after consideration of client applications, presentations of funding assistance were made to an additional four Respite Care ACT clients with significant disabilities to enable them to also enjoy a holiday outside the ACT accompanied by their support workers

We have been very fortunate to obtain sponsorship of \$15,000 over three years from Calwell and Wanniasa Community Bank Branches of Bendigo Bank for this program. We are currently seeking additional sponsors/business partners to expand this program.

Other Highlights of 2006/07

Some of the significant achievements for Respite Care ACT over the past 12 months include:

- Development and implementation of new Employment Agreements for office staff and support workers;
- Completion of the upgrade of ROMNIS, our client data base with the assistance of Dick Lang;
- Completion of the review and update of our Policy and Procedures Manual with valuable input from some of our clients;
- Development of a Child Protection Policy and implementation of training for relevant staff in reporting child abuse and neglect;
- Entering into a Funding and Promotional Alliance with FaBRiC and Home Help to identify and pursue joint funding and promotional opportunities;
- Review and update of our Risk Management Plan;
- Continuation of a comprehensive in-house training program for our support workers. We have also continued our productive partnership with Registered Training Organisations, Canberra Institute of Technology and AXIS Development, to facilitate our support workers to complete accredited training and to obtain qualifications in Disability Services, Home and Community Care and Mental Health;
- Respite Care ACT was selected as one of twelve community organisations to be listed as case studies in the Report of the Community Sector Task Force released in July 2006; and
- Achievement of a reduction of approximately \$22,000 in our workers compensation premium for 2007/08 plus a refund of approx \$16,000 on our 2006/07 premium. This reflects an excellent Occupational Health and Safety and workers compensation performance by Respite Care ACT.

I have continued as Chairperson of the ACT Division of NDS (National Disability Services), the peak body representing disability services providers.

Directions for 2007/08

As mentioned by our Chairman in his article for this Annual Report, the major and most challenging and exciting development for the next 12 months will be the proposed merger between Respite Care ACT and FaBRiC.

I firmly believe that this merger will result in a stronger, more financially robust community organisation that is better equipped to meet the growing support needs of our clients and to offer improved career opportunities for staff.

Over the next six months, however, there are a range of complex tasks and analyses to be completed in preparation for this proposed merger that will hopefully result in the new merged entity commencing on 1 January 2008. The areas to be covered include:

- Service delivery policies and practices;
- Finance and administrative procedures;
- Human resource issues;
- Accommodation and infrastructure requirements;
- Due diligence reports;
- Legal advice; and
- Name, branding and promotion of the new organisation

Farewell and Acknowledgments

This will be my last Annual Report as I am resigning as Executive Director of Respite Care ACT on 24 August 2007. My wife, Judy, and I are moving to the Coffs Harbour region where I intend to take up some consultancy work.

During my four years with Respite Care ACT, I have been so very impressed with the dedication, commitment and professionalism of all the coordinators, support workers, volunteers and administrative staff who work tirelessly and selflessly for this organisation and for the clients we support.

My heartfelt thanks also to our Chairperson, Ron Kingsbury, and all of Respite Care's Board members who have given me tremendous support and encouragement throughout my time as Executive Director.

My very best wishes for the future to all of our clients, staff, volunteers and supporters. It has been my great pleasure and privilege to have had the opportunity to work with you over the past few years

Kindest regards

Paul Bartholomew
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

COORDINATORS REPORT

The Respite Care team of Coordinators have had a productive and interesting year. They worked cohesively and have received referrals and taken on a number of new clients in our HACC, Mental Health and Living Skills programs. We continue to be able to provide a high level of support to our existing clients.

As well as coordinating the Support visits for several clients they have been able to successfully recruit, interview and sign on new Support Workers. We frequently receive very good feedback from our clients about how committed and caring our workers are. One of the many important roles of the coordinators is to ensure that the Support Workers have the necessary skills and knowledge to provide a high level of support. Through regular training the Support workers are given the latest information and procedures to be able to give quality care. Training offered throughout this year included managing Chronic Pain, Challenging behaviour, Tactile Signing, Mental Health, Duty of Care and Professional Boundaries, Co Dependency, Supporting People with a Disability, Group Support, Enabling Skills of Daily Living, Dementia, Child Protection, Autism, Grief and Loss, Epilepsy, Manual handling, Orientation and Cross Cultural Awareness. The Coordinators are committed to maintaining a high level of support for our clients.

There was one staff change amongst the Coordinators during this year, when Jenni McLelland was appointed as our Training Coordinator. The position had previously been held by Pernille Schuler who remained in her role as Roster Coordinator.

Throughout the year the Coordinators have worked closely with several other community based organisations. We have received referrals from, accepted brokerage contracts and attended case meetings with these organisations. The agencies include Koomarri, The Independent Living Centre, Community Options, Mental Health Services, Tas Housing, Weston Creek Community Centre, ACT Health, Disability ACT, Carers Association ACT Communities at work, Red Cross the M.S Society and Community Connections. The assistance that we have been able to receive from these agencies has been greatly appreciated.

The Respite Care Coordinators attended a range of external and internal training and networking events during the year. These included Mental Health training, Child Protection Training, Co Dependency Training, Dementia Network meeting, Community Network meeting, Mental Health Network Meeting, Behaviour management Training, ACTOSS Emergency Communication Training, Mission and Values training, Social Role Valorisation training, Multicultural Network meeting, Respite Network meetings, HACC Network meeting, Managing Chronic Pain Training, Manual Handling Training, Autism training, Duty Of Care and Professional Boundaries training.

We are very fortunate to have a great team working together in the Respite Care office.

We wish to thank Shirley and Ying who unfortunately resigned from the organisation during the year. Also, Maria who started with us in May, Rebecca, Pat and Joanne Kingsbury. They are never too busy to help us when needed and we want to thank them for all their help during the year.

Joanne Read
SENIOR COORDINATOR

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACTIVITIES

1. OHS COMMITTEE

1.1 Composition of Committee 2006/2007

Chair	Paul Bartholomew
Rehabilitation Coordinator	Joanne Read
Health and Safety Representatives	Jenny Pegram Debbie Smorhun Beverly Solon

1.2 Meetings

Meetings are normally held once a month

2. STAFF TRAINING

2.1 Training in lifting and manual handling

A three hour Occupational Health and Safety staff training session is provided by Respite Care ACT to all employees to equip them with the knowledge and skills required to work safely and avoid injury to themselves, clients and carers. This training is delivered by an occupational therapist, Kerri West.

The course content takes a risk management approach in relation to manual handling and teaches support workers to assess the individual circumstances in each manual handling situation, in order to determine the safest technique. This training is tailored to the specific needs of Respite Care ACT Workers.

3. TRAINING CONTENT

- Risk management, OHS Law
- The biomechanics of lifting and handling
- Client capabilities and behaviours
- Equipment Types, features and use
- Practice of techniques

This training workshop was held three times throughout the year. The sessions are held at the Respite Care offices, or the Independent Living Centre. The Occupational therapist, Kerri West brings the appropriate equipment with her to allow Support Workers to familiarise themselves with it and a coordinator attends each session.

4. WORKPLACE INJURIES AND WORKERS COMPENSATION

Our Workplace Insurer is QBE

- Number of Support Workers 125
- Total number of accidents 29
- Number of injuries resulting in Workers compensation 5

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

Respite Care has a risk management approach to occupational health and safety issues for the organisation. This is evident in the development and review of policies and procedures and is the focus of training for all staff. Our comprehensive risk management plan is regularly reviewed.

6. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

7.

The areas of OHS policy and procedures are Safe Manual Handling, Control of Infectious and Communicable Diseases: Prevention and Management of Aggressive behaviour; Response to Emergency Situations; Reporting of Accidents and Incidents; Rehabilitation and Return to Work, Swimming policy and medication policy.

Joanne Read
REHABILITATION COORDINATOR

LEISURELINK VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Due to the wonderful on-going dedication of the volunteer team, LeisureLink has continued to provide high level services to the community. During the past year, 34 volunteers have provided a total of 2,713 hours of services to 52 registered client-friends.

The working relationship established between LeisureLink and the Canberra Blind Society, in 2002, continues with 22 joint LeisureLink-CBS clients and four joint LeisureLink-CBS volunteers.

Informal feedback from LeisureLink client-friends has again indicated great appreciation of the wide-ranging support provided by our volunteers. The volunteers supplement services provided by either Respite Care ACT or other care agencies.

During the past year, recruitment of suitable volunteers was particularly difficult with only two new people joining the team. On the other hand, the past year was the best ever for retention of volunteers with only one volunteer resigning and that was after ten years of service. We are extremely lucky to have a volunteer team so committed to the philosophy and aims of our organisation.

Our Respite Care ACT Business Plan of 2005/2006 included a review of LeisureLink in accordance with the organisation's policy of regular program reviews. Initially, it was thought that the review could be undertaken by supervised tertiary students but due to lack of interest from students, an appropriate consultant is to be engaged to complete the review by the end of this year. The review is to determine the efficiency and long term directions of the program, and the viability of the processes in the current volunteering environment.

Educational components of volunteer support meetings included: diabetes; blindness and vision impairment; the nationally funded Mind Your Mind program; falls prevention; insomnia management; quality use of medicines and generics; and, meals-on-wheels and linen services. Thankyou to the representatives of Diabetes ACT; Vision Australia; Alzheimer's Australia ACT; Council on the Ageing; and, Australia Red Cross; for presenting these topics. Some volunteers also attended in-house training for support workers.

For the support provided to me throughout the year, I thank my very special team of volunteers, my colleagues and the Board of Directors.

Elaine Swain
Manager
LeisureLink Volunteer Program