



Southern Cross NEWS



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Caring response to bushfire tragedy

Southern Cross Care (Vic) CEO Jan Horsnell has praised the organisation's employees for their compassionate and generous response to Victoria's recent heatwave and bushfire tragedies.

While three of the organisation's staff and their families lost homes in the fires, a number of community clients were also heat-affected by the consistently high temperatures during Victoria's worst heatwave on record.

Ms Horsnell said staff were to be congratulated for their swift and caring response to the awful events.

As a result of the fires, SCC (Vic) employees Kaye Simpson (Macleod Cottage), Donna Bateman (Macleod Residential Service) and Leanne Beattie (Northern Community) and their families lost their homes on Black Saturday. SCC (Vic)'s response to this news was immediate with a Staff Bushfire Appeal established to raise funds.

"The call to action by our staff to this internal Appeal is one of the many examples of why I am proud and privileged to be the CEO of this organisation," said Ms Horsnell.

To date, SCC (Vic) staff has pledged almost \$15,000 to the appeal. As a result of contributions received so far the organisation has provided significant payments to those directly affected. The money was raised via a number of avenues – some staff elected to have money deducted from their salaries,

while others have been proactive in organising specific fundraising events. At SCC (Vic) residential facility, Cardinal Knox Village in Dandenong, a morning tea organised by staff, residents and volunteers raised more than \$1,000, while Community staff from the City of Melbourne/City of Yarra contracts were also active in raising money. As well, donations were received from SCC (Vic)'s sister organisations in Tasmania and Queensland and the Catholic Diocese of Queensland.

Kaye Simpson said she was overwhelmed by the outpouring of support for her and her family following Black Saturday.

"For my family, this event has changed our lives forever. Not only because we lost our home which we loved being in, but our community of Kinglake suffered so much. It has been a time of great sadness and disbelief which we are trying to come to terms with.

"Despite this there have been some amazing positives. The response from the people of Victoria was swift and effective, giving us clothes and food when we didn't have any. Closer to home, family and friends have rallied to provide housing for the next year. And even closer is SCC (Vic) - I am humbled by donations received from colleagues – this support will never be forgotten."

Ms Horsnell also praised Community Services and Residential staff for their response in ensuring elderly clients were comforted and

supported during the February heatwave which saw temperatures soar above 40 on three consecutive days, while the temperature reached almost 47 on Black Saturday.

Staff at each of the organisation's nine residential homes were also on alert to watch for any residents stressed by the heat, ensuring they were moved to air-conditioned areas.

SCC (Vic) air conditioning contractor Chillmech worked tirelessly at residential sites to upgrade cooling equipment in readiness for the heatwave. Where necessary, the company also loaned cooling units to sites to ensure all residents would not be affected by the heat.

In the days leading up to the predicted high temperatures, SCC (Vic) also issued a press release to metropolitan radio stations calling on community members who knew of an
(continued on page 3)



SCC (Vic) employee Kaye Simpson and her partner Greg Rogers (Photo courtesy Herald Sun).



News in brief

Funding received for theatre program

SCC (Vic)'s Community Services Grampians team is thrilled to announce its popular Theatre Program will run again this year thanks to a generous \$700 donation from the Ballarat branch of the Knights of the Southern Cross.

For the second year in a row, the Knights will fund the program, which allows SCC (Vic) clients an opportunity to attend theatrical performances at Her Majesty's Theatre in Ballarat.

The program was initiated by SCC (Vic) Care Manager Nola Phelan who noted many clients rarely got the opportunity to enjoy a 'special' outing of any kind.

"Whether this was due to lack of family support, frailty, ill-health or reduced mobility, many seemed to be confined to their homes and endured long periods of loneliness and lack of socialisation," says Nola.

With funding from the Knights last year, Nola and a team of carers and care managers organised four theatre outings.

This year, clients will have the opportunity to attend three performances – 'The Songs and Words That Won the War' in April; 'Musical Memoirs of a Ten Pound Pom' (July) and 'The Gaslight Company 25th Anniversary' (November). Each performance is part of Her Majesty's Theatre 2009 Daytime Theatre Series.

Nola says early responses to the theatre outings had been 'great' with tickets selling quickly.

Elvis lives!

To acknowledge the wonderful work of its volunteers, SCC (Vic) will this year hold its volunteer function at Leonda by the Yarra in Hawthorn on Thursday 14 May.

Last year, almost 100 volunteers enjoyed an afternoon of entertainment, fun and great food at the Kooyong Tennis Club.

This year's event promises to be as entertaining with a performance by Elvis Presley tribute singer, Mark Andrews. Mark launched his Elvis Leaves His Mark tribute show in 1998, and it is now regarded as one of the best tribute shows in the world.

For further information about the event, contact Volunteer Coordinator Fiona Ciavarella (fcivarella@southern-cross.org.au)

Celebrating new life at Easter

Over the past few months, many Victorians would no doubt have reflected on the tragic results of the Black Saturday bushfires and questioned the futility of such a sad and distressing event.

In the season of Lent and then Easter, many would ask "where is God in all of this?" The Christian Easter message is one of new life. This new life is offered to all by God, through Jesus Christ, and is to be found even in death.

In recent weeks, Victorians have caught glimpses of new life emerging from situations that have been devastating and painful.

With thanks to the change in weather conditions, with the support and assistance of local business communities and organisations, Governments and the wonderful generosity not just of spirit but material goods, money and prayers, can we now look to rebuild and find new life.

The great message of Easter is that God's love is greater than all the devastation, the pain and our fears.

My prayer for us all this Easter is that we might know God's love, that we might know God's life-giving spirit, even in the darkest places of our lives, our nation and our communities.

May we participate in God's transformation of death into life so that we might have life and have it abundantly.

Elsewhere within our organization I am delighted to announce the appointment of Jill Hutchison to the position of Executive Manager Strategic Operations.

Jill comes to us with an impressive background in health services with qualifications in business, health administration, nursing and psychiatric nursing. Before joining SCC (Vic), Jill had been working as a consultant in her own



business, and held a number of acting CEO positions with both Breast Screen Victoria and Dental Health Services Victoria. Prior to establishing her own consultancy, Jill was CEO of Orbost Regional Health and Acting General Manager of the Albury Base Hospital.

Finally, if you're looking for a perfect gift for either yourself or your mum for Mother's Day, why not join us for the inaugural SCC (Vic) Mother's Day Brunch on Wednesday 6 May. To be held at the beautiful Rippon Lea Estate, the Brunch will feature well-known Melbourne personality Tracy Bartram as its guest speaker.

Along with the chance to win some great door and raffle prizes, the event also provides us with an opportunity to raise valuable funds to support the work we do.

Tickets are only \$50 per person (which includes a take home gift bag of goodies from cosmetics to clothing vouchers) and can be bought by contacting the SCC (Vic) Marketing Department on 1800 508 008 or by filling in a registration form available on our website www.southern-cross.org.au

I look forward to seeing you there.

Jan Horsnell
Chief Executive Officer

A change for the better

Sarah Knabel had been running her own house cleaning business for five years when she decided she needed a career change.

The 32-year-old recalls wanting to work in something that was not only meaningful, but gave her the opportunity to give something back to her local community.

Sarah found that work sea change in aged care.

"I have always been able to communicate well with older people and it just seemed a natural that I would move into that industry," says Sarah. "At my local church I talk easily with the older parishioners and I love to hear what they have to say. Many are quite often just lonely and simply need someone to sit and chat with them."

Sarah followed her instincts and joined Southern Cross Care (Vic) last year as a Personal Care Worker, following a recommendation by a friend who had praised the organisation for its great training opportunities.

Within weeks of joining SCC (Vic) Sarah began a traineeship for a Certificate III in Home and Community Care. Had she not had the opportunity to study through SCC (Vic) – which enabled Sarah to complete her training while working – she admits she may not have joined the aged care sector.

The career change hasn't disappointed: "I love working with older people. They have such amazing life stories and experiences and a wealth of knowledge that we should all tap into it. They have so much to offer younger people, like myself."

Sarah's love of working in aged care has been recognised with a Chisholm Institute of TAFE Trainee of the Year nomination. Chisholm works with SCC (Vic) as one of its education providers.

Sarah was nominated for her leadership skills, assisting other students and positive attitude towards her work.

Sarah's Manager Eboni Ricketts, who oversees SCC (Vic)'s East Community Support Services says Sarah has been an outstanding employee from her first day at work.

"Sarah has excellent communication skills and is in constant contact with the office staff to offer to do extra shifts whenever she is available," says Eboni. "Sarah's clients are also very happy with her services – we often receive compliments about her work ethic and caring nature. She obviously really cares about her elderly clients and brings a lot of joy to their lives."

Sarah is equally complimentary about SCC (Vic), admitting her job provides ideal flexibility to work the hours that suit her home life.

"I have a 13-year-old son, so I work school hours to enable me to be able to pick him up after school and be around for things like school or social activities," she says.

Sarah admits her journey into aged care has been a personal revelation.

"I never expected the depth or intimacy of conversations I have had with so many of my older clients. I can only say to someone considering a career in aged care to give it a go. You do put a lot of yourself into the job, but there are so many rewarding outcomes to be gained."



Caring response to bushfire tragedy *continued from page 1*

older person living in their street to visit them to make sure they were keeping hydrated and cool.

"We urged every member of the community that knew of an older person, particularly those living by themselves, to call in on them and check they had plenty of cool drinks and were staying in doors out of the heat," said Ms Horsnell.

As well, the organisation's Community and Community Support personnel contacted as many clients as possible to relay specific information such as keeping up water intake, not wearing too much clothing and keeping as cool as possible.

Gavan Leonard, Regional Manager for SCC

(Vic)'s Northern Community Services said the extreme heat had affected all of the region's 255 clients.

"We sent a letter to our clients to inform them of what to do to protect themselves from heat stress," Mr Leonard said. "We also rang clients before the heatwave hit to make sure they were okay and were taking appropriate precautions, like having cold drinks handy, drawing blinds and not going out unless absolutely necessary.

"The approach was certainly appreciated, with many clients contacting us to commend the organisation for its care and support."

That support was also provided by SCC (Vic)'s Community Support team who

contacted clients to encourage common sense in the extreme conditions.

Sandra King, Regional Manager for Community Support Services Southern Region said staff were asked to regularly check on clients to ensure they were coping.

"We also personally contacted our Veteran Home Care clients (who don't have their own Care Manager) to make sure they were okay and to offer any advice they required."

SCC (Vic) launches Mother's Day Brunch

She has been described as a cross between the legendary Bette Midler and international comedian Ruby Wax. She is also regarded as one of Melbourne's most entertaining and accomplished speakers.

Guests at this year's Southern Cross Care (Vic) Mother's Day Brunch will be able to decide for themselves just which category Tracy Bartram (pictured right) best fits, when the well-known personality stars as the event's keynote speaker.

Tracy Bartram will be among the many highlights to feature at the inaugural Brunch, to be held on Wednesday 6 May between 10am and midday at the historic Rippon Lea Estate in Elsternwick.

As more than 70 per cent of SCC (Vic) residents and clients are women, an event which annually celebrates women, in particular mothers, seemed a natural fit and perfect venue for SCC (Vic) to promote and celebrate the key role women play in our community.

The Mother's Day Brunch is SCC (Vic)'s newest fundraising event. Like the popular Southern Cross Care (Vic)/Momentum Builders Corporate Charity Golf Day, the organisation aims to establish and grow the brunch as an ongoing annual event.



Open to the public to attend, tickets to the Brunch are \$50 per person (which includes a take-home gift bag of goodies - approx value \$65) and can be purchased by contacting the SCC (Vic) Marketing Department (1800 508 008) or by downloading and returning a registration form from www.southern-cross.org.au

To date, SCC (Vic) is pleased to announce support for the event from Catholic Communications, Pro Fire, Tupperware, Ringwood Jewellers, Just Jeans, Jacqui E., Palmers, Ecolab, Bunzl, Fisher and Paykel and Oxhey and Bushey Hair and Beauty.

Money raised from the brunch will enable SCC (Vic) to launch two key lifestyle initiatives:

1. The establishment of sensory gardens at each of our residential facilities (these gardens have proven therapeutic value for elderly people, particularly those who are vision impaired or have dementia) and;
2. Installing home theatres at each of our residential facilities, providing our residents, particularly those with mobility problems, an opportunity to enjoy cinema entertainment by viewing current movies and their favourite old time classics from the safety and security of their own home.

Swinging into action

The SCC(Vic)/Momentum Builders 6th Annual Corporate Charity Golf Day has attracted record sponsorship.

The event, held on 2 April, received valuable support from:

Naming Rights Sponsor: Momentum Builders

Gold Sponsors:

Microboss; Commonwealth Bank; Russell Kennedy; Campana.

Hole Sponsors:

Southgate Fleet; Advantage Salary Packaging; Outcomes Plus; Bidvest; Munters.

A full report on the golf day will be featured in the next issue of Southern Cross News.



Outstanding response to appeal

Residents at Southern Cross Care (Vic)'s John H Kerr facility in Newport will sleep a little easier thanks to an outstanding response to the organisation's fundraising appeal to purchase new electric high-low beds.

To date, SCC (Vic) has received more than \$13,000 in donations, which has enabled the organisation to buy four beds (valued at \$3,000 each). Donations have been received from the SCC (Vic) donor base (\$3,700); the Rotary Club of Footscray (\$6,450) and the Knights of the Southern Cross (Sunshine branch).

Mr Paul Conidi, the Knights Sunshine branch Chairman presented SCC (Vic) CEO Jan Horsnell with a cheque at the organisation's

head office in Oakleigh (pictured right).

Ms Horsnell was thrilled to receive the donation, thanking the Knights for their generosity.

"The response to this appeal has been wonderful," says Ms Horsnell. "We are so grateful for those who donate to our appeals, particularly as they are run to raise valuable funds to purchase items that make a real difference to the quality of life of our residents and clients."



The high-low beds, which have electronic controls, enable residents lying in bed to reposition themselves comfortably and also assists them to get in and out of bed more quickly and easily.

Boost to volunteer numbers

Southern Cross Care (Vic) has launched a volunteer recruitment campaign aimed at boosting numbers across its residential and community services sites.

A recent advertising campaign to promote the Community Visitors Scheme, of which SCC (Vic) is a partner along with a number of other aged care organisations, resulted in 25 new volunteers for the organisation.

With the aim to double that number, Volunteer Coordinator, Fiona Ciavarella says the organisation will target a range of differing markets to maximise exposure and to promote the volunteering opportunity to as many different groups as possible.

While older people have traditionally made up the majority of volunteers at SCC (Vic), the organisation is also keen to tap into younger markets, such as university and school students.

“Along with local newspaper, community radio and website advertising over the coming months we will also be targeting local church parishes, schools, clubs and universities, medical centres and job support centres,” says Fiona.

Volunteers play a vital role in keeping SCC (Vic) clients and residents connected to



their wider community, enhancing their quality of life through ongoing contact and support during regular visits.

The organisation values its almost 400 volunteers who collectively contribute more than 43,000 hours of their time each year.

SCC (Vic) offers a range of volunteering opportunities from one on one regular

visits to assisting with group activities, like bingo, craft or music; gardening help and advice; administrative work or fundraising activities.

To find out more about volunteering at Southern Cross Care (Vic) please call Fiona on (03) 8564 1800 or alternatively email volunteer@southern-cross.org.au

One hundred reasons to smile

In 1909, work began on the Panama Canal, the North Pole was reached for the first time and one of Australia's best-known actors, Errol Flynn was born.

1909 also marks the year Mary Browne (pictured right) was born. While perhaps not as famous as the above events, Mary's birth at Woorie Yallock just east of Melbourne was no less significant.

The centurion, who these days is a much-loved resident at Southern Cross Care (Vic)'s Templestowe Pioneer Village, recently celebrated her 100th birthday surrounded by residents, family and friends. Best wishes were also passed on in cards from Australia's Prime Minister, Mr Kevin Rudd and Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth.

The third child (and one of 14) of Alexander and Georgina Hatty, Mary started school at



Timboon in 1915 and later went on to work as a machinist at a Collingwood shirt making company and in a bakery at Carlton.

She married local police constable Gordon Browne in 1931 and spent the next 28 years moving around Victoria as Gordon's job dictated, before finally settling in Warrandyte in 1959. After Gordon's death in 1989, Mary continued to live at home before moving to Templestowe Pioneers Village just over a year ago.

An active participant in Village life, Mary loves listening to music, in particular that provided by entertainers who visit the home every fortnight, as well as joining other residents on regular outings.



Spend to save

With 25 to 50 per cent off and many two for one offers from some of Melbourne's best restaurants, is it any wonder The Entertainment™ Book is an annual best seller.

The Entertainment™ Books were first introduced to Australia in 1994 and have since been developed for major capital cities and regions throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Selling for just \$65, the book includes many thousands of dollars in offers and discounts that can be used in restaurants; for arts, sporting and tourism attractions and to receive great rates at some of the country's best hotels and tourist destinations.

SCC (Vic) is currently selling The Entertainment Book™ as one of its fundraising activities for the year: \$13 from the sale of each book goes directly to the organisation. Money raised through fundraising provides much-needed funds to support the work SCC (Vic) does in providing residents and clients with a range of programs and quality services that maximise their quality of life.

To order a copy of the 2009 Entertainment Book™ or to be sent an order form, contact Louise Colban at SCC (Vic) Marketing Department on T: (03) 8564 1800.



Southern Cross Care (Vic)
45-47 Warrigal Road, Hughesdale Vic 3166
T (03) 8564 1800 F (03) 8564 1880
E mail@southern-cross.org.au
W www.southern-cross.org.au
Freecall 1800 508 008

Every drop counts

Southern Cross Care (Vic) has teamed with South East Water (SEW) and Yarra Valley Water (YVW) in a bid to reduce water consumption across its metropolitan residential sites.

SCC (Vic) Property Services Manager, Ms Leslie Hamilton says the organisation has committed to the Victorian Government's WaterMap initiative, which aims to assist major commercial, industrial and institutional customers that consume more than 10 ML a year or more of water to improve their water efficiency by at least 10 per cent.

The WaterMap program builds on the Government's successful 'Pathways to Sustainability' program, which focused on reducing water use by the top 200 water users in Melbourne through the development and implementation of water management action plans. This program has saved 6.2 billion litres of water a year since 2001.

Ms Hamilton says while it was not mandatory for SCC (Vic) to be a part of the program, the organisation was keen to be involved to reinforce its commitment to playing a part in contributing to Victoria's water savings.

"Both SEW and YVW have worked with us to create a WaterMap program on

ways in which we can save water. Each authority not only provided us with free shower heads at our residential sites, but also worked with us in swapping over our old shower heads for these more water-efficient ones.

"SEW has also attached data loggers on water metres at our Cardinal Knox residential facility in Dandenong, which provided valuable information on where the most water was being used. As a result of that information, we have since installed water saving flushes, showerheads and water reducing washers (also provided by SEW)."

Ms Hamilton says the WaterMapping program offered a range of benefits to the organisation, including:

- Reduced water consumption and introduction of water saving initiatives
- Reduced sewer discharge costs
- Reduction in water bills
- Staff, resident and visitor education of how we use and can conserve water
- Behavioural change of staff and other water users that leads to further water conservation
- Helping to ensure water is available for future generations

Help us shape the future of aged care

Since 1969 Southern Cross Care (Vic) has made a real difference to the lives of thousands of older Victorians. Yet the ever-increasing demand for aged care services is one of the greatest challenges we face.

Your bequest or donation is a gift of caring that will help us deliver essential community, retirement living and residential care services for today and tomorrow. For further information please contact 1800 508 008 visit www.southern-cross.org.au or write to PO Box 298 Oakleigh Vic 3166

