

The background of the cover is composed of various puzzle pieces. The top half features blue puzzle pieces with a white and blue sky pattern. The bottom half features green puzzle pieces with a grass pattern. Some pieces are missing, creating a fragmented look.

Mental Health Carers Arafmi Australia

2014-2015 Annual Report

*Individually diverse, collectively
unique, nationally united*



Arafmi
Mental Health Carers | Australia

1 About Us



Mental Health Carers ARAFMI Australia comprises mental health carer organisations across Australia.

MHCAA member agencies are the leading mental health carer support agencies across Australia. They provide specialist mental health support to families, carers and their friends. Support includes: linking people to other carers who can offer face to face peer support, education services with other carers, and advocacy services which assist individuals to identify and find solutions to their challenges.

Our Vision

People with a mental illness, and their families and carers, will be understood, respected and provided with a level of treatment and support which provides them with the opportunity to be included in their community.

Our Mission

Mental Health Carers Arafmi Australia's mission is to represent at a national level the interests and concerns of families and others voluntarily caring for people with mental illness throughout Australia.

2 President's Report



From Grassroots to National Voice

This is my last report as President, so in particular I wish to thank all members for their efforts and hard work over the last year in bringing the views of mental health carers into the spotlight. Thank-you to our Executive Officer, Jane Henty for her commitment and energy that she has put in to her important role.

It was in the late 1970's that families and carers of people with a mental illness throughout Australia came together to provide understanding and mutual support to each other as they struggled to assist their family member who was hospitalised due to mental illness. They also worked with mental hospital services to establish supported community based accommodation for their family member.

This was the start of the Arafmi* (Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill) movement.

Almost 40 years later, and even with a greatly improved medical response to mental ill health, the sometimes unpredictable and cyclical nature of mental illness can still wreak havoc in the personal lives of not only individuals, but their chief supporters- families and carers.

Today, this movement has morphed into the MHCAA (Mental Health Carers Arafmi Australia), a strong national advocacy body which takes the grassroots experience of mental health carers across Australia and provides a platform for them to raise their voice and advocate for their needs in the national health and social policy decision-making arena!

MHCAA is the only national advocacy group solely concerned with the well-being and promotion of the needs of mental health carers.

A key partnership for us is the hosting of the national office by Mind Australia. I wish to thank Frances Sanders and Gerry Naughtin for their ongoing support with this. Member organisations in all states and territories continue to provide the understanding and the peer support that only other carers can provide. This is done through specific carer services such as telephone helplines, information giving, and exchange through educational and support groups.

Grassroots to National Voice (reg.) is the name given to the consultative process which takes the everyday experience of carers into the national arena. Twice a year member organisations meet face-to-face to report and identify key issues affecting them as carers and the people for who they provide care. This is the engine room of the MHCAA. It is from here that the advocacy agenda and work-plans for the year ahead are made.

Information is collated regularly through various reports. A website called ournationalvoice.org.au also allows people to register and share their experience.

A new initiative this calendar year has been the creation of Advocacy Members; these are non-paying members who want to support the advocacy work of the MHCAA.

MHCAA co-ordinates its advocacy through our Executive Officer (Jane Henty) who works in close partnership with service providers and other peak bodies such as Mental Health Australia, Carers Australia, SANE and Suicide Prevention Australia.

MHCAA welcomes the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and is working hard to ensure that funding packages and structures will build on existing best practice providing long term supportive relationships for people with mental ill-health and their families.

I would like to give a special vote of thanks to Wendy Groot from Tasmania who acted in the EO role while Jane was overseas on a World Health Organisation Internship for four months at the end of 2014.

Kind Regards

Warren Jenkins
President
Mental Health Carers Arafmi Australia

*Note that in Victoria the name of the organisation always was Arafemi – the Association of Relatives and Friends of Emotionally and Mentally Ill.





3 Executive Officer's Report

This year was a year of consolidation for Mental Health Carers Arafmi Australia (MHCAA). We have worked hard to strengthen our organisation as a whole, as well as continuing to raise the voice of mental health carers.

Strengthening the Organisation

Our office is now well established at Mind Australia's central office in Heidelberg, Melbourne. Their significant infrastructure has further strengthened our operational platform.

The second initiative which has strengthened our organisation, has been the expansion of our membership. We have a new tier of membership entitled "My National Voice- Advocacy Membership".

My National Voice Advocacy Members collectively form a national carer community. This community proudly stands together to:

- Be informed about mental health carer issues
- Have a voice to be heard and to speak up about mental health carer issues
- Take action and contribute their ideas to our work.

Membership is currently free & open to families & carers (of someone experiencing mental health issues), and also friends of MHCAA (people or groups who have an interest in mental health carer and family issues).

We look forward to our individual members joining forces with us in the coming year - to be a national voice for mental health carers.

Advocacy 2014-15

Strong and persuasive advocacy on behalf of the MHCAA membership has never been more important. Partnership has been crucial to all our advocacy activities which are outlined below. It is worth noting some of our recent activities which illustrate the size and depth of our advocacy agenda. MHCAA has conducted the following activities:

Carers Advocacy Conference

This year we hosted a conference in partnership with Arafmi NSW entitled 'Advocacy: Empowering Carer Advocates to be Champions for Change.' It was a great success. All the speakers passed on very valuable information for carers and carer support workers. Attendees were better informed as to how they can advocate on behalf of those they care for and also to Government for change.

Representation of Carers

We represented carers at a Commonwealth level including meeting with parliamentarians one-to-one and at the Senate Select Committee on Health. We also attended numerous national forums and events including: The Parliamentary Friends of Carers, The Parliamentary Friends of Mental Illness, and Mental Health Australia's Policy Forums.

Projects

National Guide for Working with Carers: We have been participating in a consortium to develop a 'best practice' nationally consistent practical guide for working with carers of people with a mental illness in Australia. This document will provide practical guidance to assist providers in public and private sectors and community managed organisations to work with carers in a meaningful, mutually beneficial way using a partnership approach- which will enhance outcomes for consumers and support carers and families in their caring role.

Caring4Carers: The Otsuka and Lundbeck Alliance has embarked on an international initiative entitled caring4carers.com – a web-based carer resource especially for schizophrenia carers, which will provide essential information for carers, such as a service locator, as well as acting as a curator to all good information already in the public domain. Lunbeck provided funding to purchase our expert advice for Caring4carers.

SANE Online Forums: The Carers Forum (lead by SANE) is an Australian service for families, friends and other carers of someone living with mental illness. It provides a safe, anonymous online space for carers to share stories and help each other. All our member organisations are continuing to participate in the project. Local communities and carers are able to access the national online forum via member websites.

Presentations

We presented on mental health carer issues at various forums including: Designing & Delivering Mental Health Services within the NDIS, Mental Health Carers Tasmania's forums about the NDIS, and Arafmi NSW's yearly Carer Peer Worker Forum.

Submissions

We provided a range of submissions to National reviews including: NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Policy Framework online consultation, Labor's national platform 2015, NDIS: Quality and Safeguarding Framework and the NDIS Legislation review. We also advocated on the issues outlined in Arafmi NSW's paper entitled "Medication and Mental Illness: A Carers' Perspective".

Thank-you to our members

Our members are central to our advocacy structure of taking the grassroots experience of carers and translating that to the national voice of mental health carers. Thank-you to our members and partners who have worked with us this year.

In particular, I would like to thank Wendy Groot, the CEO of Mental Health Carers Tasmania for stepping into the role of Executive Officer of MHCAA while I was on extended leave in 2014.

Yours sincerely

Jane Henty
Executive Officer





4 Committee Members

**Warren Jenkins, President**

Warren was the previous Executive Officer of MHCAA and Executive Director of Arafemi Victoria. He has spent over 25 years in the management of mental health and disability services. Warren has been a mental health carer for 20 years, and represents the Mind Australia Board.

**Bronwyn Russell, Vice President**

Bronwyn has degrees in Psychology and Biology, and a Graduate Diploma in Management. She is presently the Director of Engineers Australia Northern Division, President of Mental Illness Fellowship NT and an ordinary member of MHCAA.

**Kristine Havron, Secretary**

Kristine is the President of Arafmi NSW and a member of Mental Health Carers Arafmi Australia. She currently represents MHCAA on the National Mental Health Consumer and Carers Forum.

**Jean Platts, Treasurer**

Jean has been a Board member of Arafmi Queensland since 1999 and held positions of Treasurer and Vice President. She has previously been the Qld Carer representative on the National Mental Health Consumer & Carer Forum and has held the positions of Deputy Co Chair and Ordinary Executive member.

**Kate Shipway**

Kate is President of Mental Health Carers Tasmania. Kate has been involved as a mental health carer and advocate for over 10 years. She represented Tasmania on the National Mental Health Consumer and Carers Forum from 2005-09 and represented ARAFMI Tasmania on the Mental Health Council of Tasmania from 2003-2011.

**Patrick Hardwick**

Patrick became a carer 19 years ago. Patrick holds positions within: the Private Mental Health Consumer Carer Network, the Private Mental Health Alliance, the board of Mental Health Carers Arafmi WA (now HelpingMinds), the board of Mental Health Australia, the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum, and the National Register of Mental Health Consumers and Carers.

5 Our voting members

Our members are long-standing providers of mental health services for consumers and carers. MHCAA would like to sincerely thank our members for their tireless support and commitment in 2014 -2015.

Mind Australia (Victoria & South Australia)



Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia NT



Mental Health Carers ARAFMI NSW Inc



HelpingMinds (formerly Arafmi)



Mental Health Carers Tasmania



Mental Health Carers Arafmi Queensland Inc.



6 Member's news



HelpingMinds – Western Australian Member

By Debbie Childs, CEO, HelpingMinds

As with all states, we in Western Australian at Arafmi WA, have had another very busy year with demands for our services ever increasing. In the last 12 months we have undergone a total brand review and in September we unveiled our new name, logo, tagline and website to support our evolution to a leading not for profit Mental Health Services and Carer support organisation.

Our new organisation name “HelpingMinds” reflects our commitment to provide quality counselling, respite and support services to carers and individuals affected by mental health. The new tagline “Helping You” illustrates that HelpingMinds is here to support and understand carers and clients as they try and live their best life possible.

Our new website helpingminds.org.au will seek to increase our online presence and help to communicate with our current carers, clients and members as well as reach out to other members of the community seeking help and support.

Overall the feedback, regarding our new trading name, has been fantastic. This year we also undertook an external service evaluation of our carer support services; this provided excellent feedback for our teams with a 99% positive response for services received. In the last month we started offering an online 8 week support program for Carers and Families “Recovering Our Families” that allows families to seek support online outside our normal business hours.

In addition in the last month we have signed a further two contracts with the Commonwealth Government to allow us to expand our service delivery further into the rural WA community.



Picture: Debbie Childs (HelpingMinds CEO) and Patrick Hardwick (HelpingMinds Board Member) at the launch of their rebranding.

Arafmi Qld – Queensland Member

By Marj Bloor, Executive Officer, Arafmi Qld

The last year has been one of consolidation for Arafmi Queensland. Having secured funding from Queensland Health for the period July 2014 to June 2017 we have continued to develop and deliver the core carer support services of support groups, education and telephone support. These supports are in addition to four respite programs and two Mental Health Carer Hubs. Our aim has always been to assist mental health carers as much as possible by giving them some options, greater confidence, and a sense of connection, to minimise their feeling of isolation and reduce any negative impact of mental health issues.



Picture: Respite participants and staff having lunch.

Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (NT) – Northern Territory Member

By Lorraine Davies, Executive Officer, Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (NT)

Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (NT) over the past year has seen the organisation continue with its invaluable support programs providing support to carers and families of people living with a mental illness in both Darwin and Alice Springs. Our programs have included individual and group based peer support as well as educational programs including Wellways and Remind Assisting Families. We also have had a carer peer support person based at the inpatient unit who once a week was able to provide support to family members who have a loved one as an inpatient on the ward.

In addition to our Commonwealth and Territory funded carer programs, we also have a drop in centre for people with a mental illness at our Darwin centre. Over the past year our drop in centre has seen a significant increase of people attending the centre as more services are referring people to the program, as well as a number of homeless people with mental illness finding out about the program and coming along to enjoy the activities and social interaction provided in our safe environment.

Our Alice Springs centre moved offices at the end of the last year to a new premises in Reg Harris Lane just off the Todd Mall. The move was initiated to accommodate our current carer support program together with our newly funded Department of Social Services program providing support to children and youth at risk of developing a mental illness. These two programs will work consecutively to provide holistic support to families and carers of people living with a mental illness as well as children who may be at risk of developing mental health issues.

We predict that the coming year will see a number of challenges arise for carers and families with the imminent roll out of the NDIS and anticipate assistance will be needed to support people through the transition to the NDIS system. We intend to advocate for people through the transition process and provide support as is required.



Mind Australia- Victorian / South Australian Member

By Frances Sanders, General Manager Organisational Initiatives, Mind Australia

Mind Australia has a diverse and geographically spread team of carer workers across Victoria and South Australia. We have been busy strengthening the service offering and our positioning to ensure more families and carers can locate and access appropriate support at a time when they need it. As the provider of the Carer Helpline for mental health carers in Victoria, we have been better using technology and our large pool of opportunities to promote support to carers. With over 700 staff on the ground, we are seeking to maximise every contact with families and carers, to link them with support. We have also extended the helpline support to families and carers of Mind in South Australia and created pathways for our Queensland staff to refer to our National partner- Arafmi QLD.

As part of our ambitious Family and Carer Strategy, we have rolled out new orientation and advanced training for all mental health staff; helping to ensure carers are central in all of our programs and services. We have developed a range of new resources that strengthen our ability to inform, involve and support carers as well as developing clearer processes and protocols for staff to assist in identifying, welcoming and supporting carers as part of contemporary mental health practice. These initiatives include the development of a carer peer warmline.

As an advocate on behalf of families and carers, we are excited to be part of 3 major projects that aim to raise profile, shape policy and contribute to knowledge about families and carers. These works include working with HelpingMinds to fund a National Guide for working with carers, conducting an international literature review of carers and individualised funding schemes, and economic research on the contribution of carers.



Picture: The above image is depicted in Mind's carer resources. It portrays the hope and assistance that Mind provides to carers.



Mental Health Carers ARAFMI NSW Inc- New South Wales Member

By Kristine Havron, Board Member, Mental Health Carers ARAFMI NSW

Highlight achievements for Arafmi NSW this year include:

- Refurbishment of office premises.
- Shared services with other NGOs. This will allow Arafmi NSW access to expertise and specialisation of corporate services which will enable quality improvement.
- Submitted passage of amendments to enhance carer protections in the Mental Health Act. These changes were proclaimed 30 August 2015.
- Arafmi NSW created two new sub committees: the Alcohol & Drug Peak Advisory Committee (AD PAC) and Younger Persons Carer Peak Advisory Committee (YPAC). External organisations were also invited to mutually share information and resources within these committees.
- Arafmi convened the third Mental Health Carer Support Worker Conference on the 22nd September at the new Collective Purpose activity space at 80 William Street Woolloomooloo.

Champions of Change Consultation

Mental Health Carers Arafmi NSW Inc., ('Arafmi') was funded to undertake a consultation with carers to better understand how to mobilise them on behalf of mental health reform in NSW. This 'Champions for Change' consultation took place in the Hornsby RSL on the 24th of June and was attended by 76 people. The survey to be administered was developed after extensive discussion by 'Being' and largely adopted with adaptations for the carer audience to make results more comparable. This survey was also made available on line.

The participants were asked what they would like to achieve in mental health advocacy for reform and what were the barriers to their advocacy.

The most relevant responses relating to barriers to carer advocacy included:

- 'I don't know where my community advisory committee is'
- 'Community advisory committees and a contact list - knowing who to contact'
- Uncertainty about lobbying government and politicians, local members federal and state'
- 'Easily accessible carer peer support and training – free'

In response to the findings of the Champions for Change consultation Arafmi has designed a survey which has been reviewed by the Clinical Advisory Council and which we hope to have sent to the Chief Executives of Local Health Districts for completion to help identify peer workers and liaison officers in each LHD as well as new or existing Community or Carer reference Groups or Committees to participate in.



7 Financial Statements



Balance Sheet

As of June 2015

Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash On Hand	\$83,726.31	
Trade Debtors	\$7,000.00	
Total Current Assets	<u>\$90,726.31</u>	
Total Assets		<u>\$90,726.31</u>
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Suspense Account	-\$64.41	
Income In Advance	\$42,000.00	
Accrued Expenses	\$13,875.84	
Total Current Liabilities	<u>\$55,811.43</u>	
Total Liabilities		<u>\$55,811.43</u>
Net Assets		<u>\$34,914.88</u>
Equity		
Retained Earnings	\$63,153.63	
Current Year Earnings	<u>-\$28,238.75</u>	
Total Equity		<u>\$34,914.88</u>

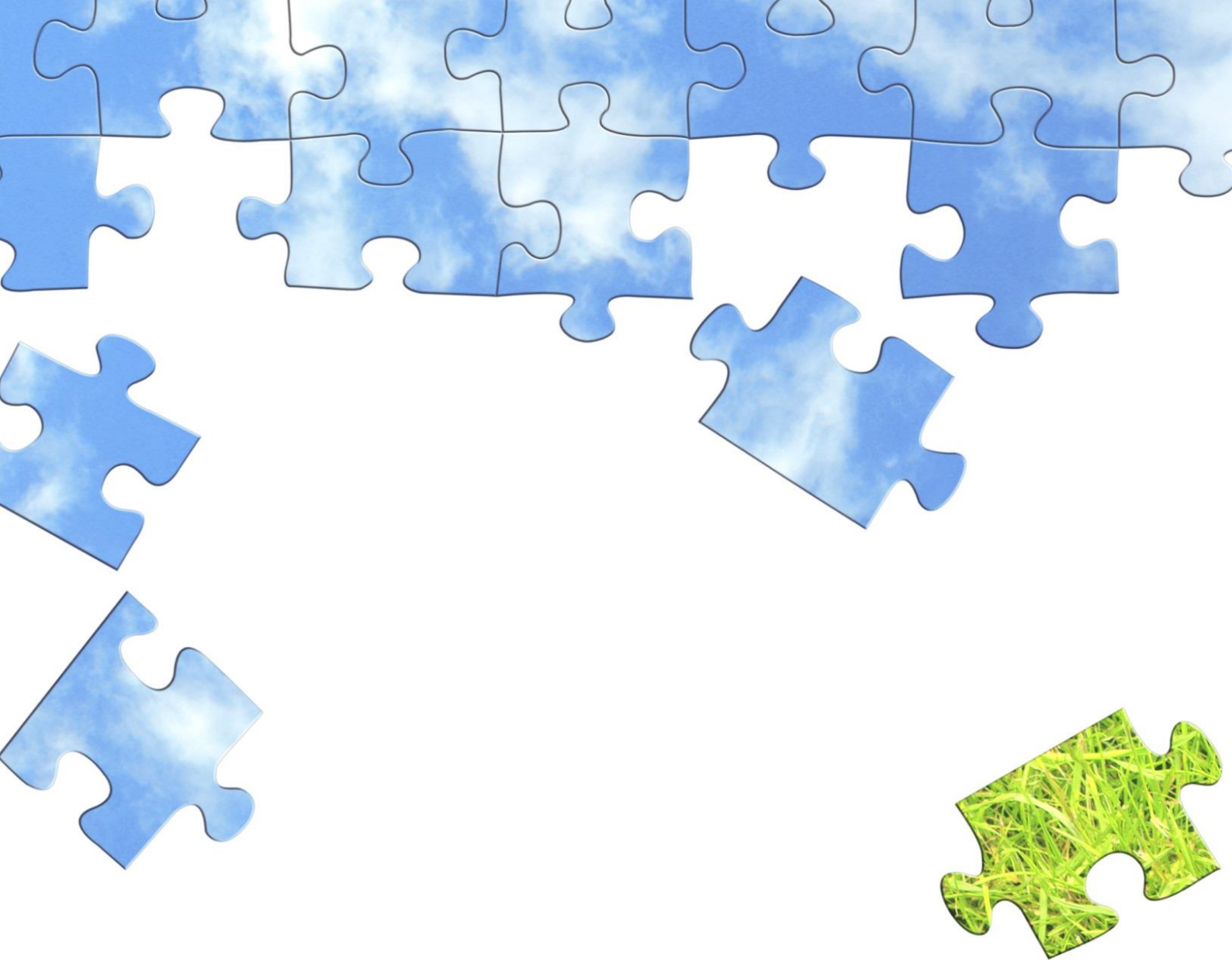
Profit & Loss Statement

July 2014 through June 2015

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Income	
Grant Income	\$17,000.00
Membership Fees	\$4,292.00
Nat Project Funds	\$33,000.00
Bank Interest	\$610.73
Total Income	<u>\$54,902.73</u>
Expenses	
Bank Charges	\$40.00
Conference	\$608.00
Couriers	\$6.00
Membership Fees	\$277.92
Training	\$175.00
Face to Face Meetings	\$3,053.55
Website	\$65.83
Insurance	\$2,058.24
Misc MHCAA costs	\$5,112.84
Travel & Accomodation	\$6,468.56
Teleconference cost	\$144.42
Employment Expenses	\$65,131.12
Total Expenses	<u>\$83,141.48</u>
Operating Profit	<u>-\$28,238.75</u>
Other Income	
Other Expenses	
Net Profit / (Loss)	<u>-\$28,238.75</u>





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