Easter has come and gone! We hope the lovely festival of Easter had brought love, happiness, faith and hope to you and your family. May your home be blessed with the joy and gladness of Easter, and all your life be filled with peace.

CVS is turning 25
Amazing how time flies! The Community Visitors Scheme (CVS) is stepping into its 25th year of providing visiting service to residents in residential aged care facilities.

A special ceremony will be held later in the year to mark this milestone and to commemorate the achievements and contribution of our volunteers, who have been tirelessly providing friendship and companionship to the lonely and isolated.

It will also provide an opportunity for Sydney Local Health District to pay tribute and gratitude to our team of dedicated and devoted volunteers.

It would be a great honour to have your participation in the celebration. If you have any celebration ideas, please kindly let us know, and we will pass them onto to the District for consideration.

Flu Vaccination
CVS is offering volunteers free influenza vaccination this year.

The flu season in 2017 saw NSW recording more than 100,000 cases of influenza notifications – one of the busiest since the 2009 pandemic. More than 90 per cent of the 1,100 flu related deaths in 2017 were by people aged over 65 years of age.

Because of the significant risk of infection and its devastating impact, the Government is providing two new ground-breaking flu vaccines free of charge to Australians aged 65 years and over. These vaccines have been specifically made for the elderly by generating a strong immune response.

The influenza virus can affect anyone, even the fit and the healthy. The best defence against influenza and its complications is to have a flu vaccination before the peak season starts in June. Influenza vaccinations promote protection for others who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons or due to their age. If enough people are vaccinated against the infection, they can help protect the vulnerable.

Please contact the CVS office if you intend to have the vaccination at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

March Workshop
It was lovely to see so many volunteers attending the March workshop, an opportunity to catch up with many of our volunteers. The Workshop touched on a few topical subjects, including LGBTI issues, Aboriginal history & Culture, and Elder Abuse. It’s definitely hard to learn about the suffering and negativities those groups of people had been experiencing and are still experiencing up to this day. That is why it is important for us to be aware of all those issues and see if we can do anything to make things brighter.

Because of the complexity of those issues, we have included in the newsletter articles on: (i) Awareness points for interacting with LGBTI people and (ii) Understanding Aboriginal Culture.

Residential Aged Care Reform
As the population continues to age, the Commonwealth Department of Health has been working with the Aged Care sector to develop a longer-term reform that delivers more stable funding arrangements. The University of Wollongong has taken on the role to develop options and recommendations to help inform the design of future residential aged care funding models. (Source: Department of Health)

For your diary, the May Workshop will be held on Saturday, 19th May 2018. We look forward to seeing you all there. In the meantime, please take good care. Winter is on its way.

All the very best,
Valerie CHU & Jeannie TAM
About 10% of the population is estimated to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual. There is a reasonable assumption that there are LGBTI residents in aged care facilities and that you might be interacting with them and may not be aware of this, given the frequent invisibility of these populations.

1. Don’t assume that all LGBTI people are alike or have similar concerns.

LGBTI people are considered sexual minorities by the dominant culture, in that they challenge ideas of gender and sexuality. Although often grouped together, however, each of the letters LGBTI stand for groups of people who comprise unique populations and have different concerns and experiences.

Gay men, particularly if they are Caucasian, will often see sexual orientation as the most salient variable in their lives, and will be privileged in many other ways. Lesbians often experience sexism, both within the LGBTI community and in the larger society. Therefore, they may experience more similarities to other women’s lives than to those of gay men. The LGBTI community is still male dominated; often the use of the generic term “gay” will render women and their concerns invisible.

Bisexual people are often ignored by gay men and lesbians; bisexuality may be considered an invalid sexual orientation, one that is an indication of confusion on the way to becoming gay/lesbian. They may be seen as traitors to the gay community, receiving privilege if dating or married to someone of the other sex. Therefore, they may feel ostracized by both the heterosexual and the gay communities.

Transgender people challenge the gender they are assigned at birth; their main concern is that of gender identity, and may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual. They can be ostracized by LGB people. Some LGB people don’t see any connection of gender identity to sexual orientation, and do not like the community to include the “T” part. Therefore, Trans-people may feel ostracized by both the LGB community and the larger society.

2. Homophobia/Heterosexism creates a context for LGBTI people that provides a backdrop for many interpersonal interactions as well as psychological development.

Homophobia is the hatred or fear of homosexuality and/or homosexual people.

Heterosexism is the privileging of heterosexuality, and is often manifested by the assumption that everyone is heterosexual. It also includes the assumption that heterosexuality is the best sexual orientation, and that being gay/lesbian/bisexual is not as good as being heterosexual.
Bisexual people and transgender people deal with bi-phobia and trans-phobia respectively. Bi-phobia is the fear and/or hatred of bisexuality and/or bisexual people. Trans-phobia is the fear and/or hatred of transgender people.

The prevailing culture in many countries is both heterosexist and homophobic. Lesbians and gay men are acutely aware of this, from language that is used to overt acts of violence, such as hate crimes. One common expression heard often in many informal gatherings include “that’s so gay” (meaning bad). These create a climate in which gay/lesbian/bisexual and transgender people are likely to be careful about revealing their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

3. **Coming out includes both a personal realization of one’s sexual orientation and then telling others.**

Heterosexual people do not have to ‘come out’ since heterosexuality is presumed. LGBTI people have to tell others, again and again. This is a continuous, never ending process.

The coming out process occurs in stages. The person’s stage of development will influence their reactions. The more comfortable they are with their identity as LGBTI, the more likely they are to disclose to others and the more resiliency they will have in dealing with homophobia and heterosexism around them.

Never assume that anyone is ready to disclose their sexual orientation to others, without explicit agreement. A person may have disclosed to you, but may not want other people to know. It is their right and choice about whom to tell.

Don’t single out a known gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender student to speak for everyone in the LGBTI community or even as a representative of their specific group.

4. **Be careful in your use of language, and in challenging others’ use of language.**

Don’t assume heterosexuality and use language that includes the possibility of same sex relationships. If you hear people using derogatory language (such as the “it’s so gay”), challenge them. Most people won’t use derogatory language regarding people of colour in front of others; why allow it for LGBTI people?

5. **Examine your own attitudes about LGBTI people.**

Try to appreciate LGBTI people and understand the effects of homophobia / heterosexism / biphobia / transphobia in their lives. Being tolerant is not enough, as it implies that there is something wrong that needs to be tolerated. Work to develop an appreciation for LGBTI people. Identify for yourself areas of discomfort relating to each group (L, G, B, and T) and work to undo areas of prejudice. Be careful to not let your areas of prejudice bias your interactions with them.
Understanding Aboriginal Culture

The Aboriginal peoples of Australia have a continuous, sophisticated and spiritual way of life. The Dreaming is the religious belief. Baiami (God) created everything in the Dreamtime when the earth was in total darkness. Everything; the people, the animals, the trees, flowers, sky, earth, stars are all related in a spiritual way because they were made by their spiritual ancestors. There are many different Dreamtime stories that illustrate how the earth; everything on it, above it and under it was created and how people should relate to everything.

Aboriginal people can be part of the Dreaming through ceremonies, dance, storytelling, songs and painting. To become an adult Aboriginal people must carry out the instructions given by the Elders who facilitate learning through special ceremonies or ‘rules’. These ceremonies were important for passing on important learnings which marks the passage from childhood to adulthood.

DREAMING, ABORIGINAL SPIRITUALITY, CULTURAL PRACTICES AND CEREMONIES

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ABORIGINAL CONCEPT OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Extended family
Aboriginal people have strong family values. The family system has an extended family structure. The concepts of extended family and ‘community and family’ in Aboriginal communities encompass the idea that children are not just the concern of the biological parents, but of the entire community. The raising, care, education, discipline of children are the responsibility of everyone – male, female, young and old.

An extended family structure is based on:
• Blood related (mum, dad, brother, sister, grandmother/father, cousin, aunty, uncle)
• Marriage (aunty, uncle, cousin)
• Community (Elder, neighbour, friend, organisation)
• Kinship system (aunty, uncles, cousins or Elders)
• Non-related family (Elder, friend, community member)
• Mutual respect
• A sense of belonging
• Acceptance and knowledge of Aboriginal kinship ties
• Mutual obligation and support.

The Aboriginal flag was designed in 1971 by Harold Thomas, an artist and Luritja man, originally from Central Australia.

- **Black** – represents the Aboriginal people of Australia.
- **Yellow Circle** – represents the Sun, the giver of life and protector.
- **Red** – represents the red earth, the red ochre used in ceremonies and Aboriginal peoples’ spiritual relation to the land.

Aboriginal culture today is the same now as it was over 100,000 years ago. Aboriginal culture is cyclical, i.e. it is ongoing; the beginning was in the Dreamtime but those beliefs and practices are just as important and still practiced today as they were thousands of years ago.

(Source: www.carersaustralia.com.au – Working with Aboriginal Communities)
**Kinship**

Kinship systems define where a person fits into the community. It defines the roles and responsibilities for raising and educating children, and structures systems of moral and financial support within the community.

The family structure is linked with the community and with this knowledge comes a complex system of roles and obligations within the community. A borignal children learn at an early age the kinship ties that exist within their community and subsequently their place in the community.

**ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES**

There is no universal Aboriginal language. Each nation has its own distinct language and/or dialect. It has been suggested there are up to 300 Aboriginal nations throughout the country, speaking about 250 different languages with up to 600 dialects.

Past assimilation policies prohibited Aboriginal people from using their language which contributed to the breakdown in the teaching of language between generations. A borignal culture is an oral culture. This practice had a devastating effect on the preservation of language and knowledge, and many languages have been lost as a result.

**ART, SONG AND DANCE**

A borignal people did not have a written language and their culture is verbal, demonstrative, and symbolic and is depicted in art (eg. dots in central desert and xray art in the top end of Australia), song and dance whilst their way of life is documented in paintings on rocks and in caves. They can only paint, sing or dance certain kinds of animal, birds and plants that belong to their moiety or skin (totem). Some may also have to obtain permission from their Elders to use these mediums to present their culture.

**RESPECT AND SENSITIVITY**

Respect is very important in every social structure in Aboriginal communities. Respect for Elders, the land, animals and ancestors are fundamental aspects of A borignal culture.

Following the death in some communities, people may find it disrespectful to say the deceased person’s name or to refer to the deceased person in general conversation. It is also unfavourable to display pictures or images of deceased people.

**BURIALS**

Burials were either by burial in the ground or exposure to the elements on a platform. The bones could either be buried or placed in hollow trees. There were taboos related to people who have passed away such as not mentioning their names or the campsite abandoned and house smoked or burnt down.

**MEN’S AND WOMEN’S ROLES**

Women and men are equal in the decision making within the clan groups; although their responsibilities may be different. They also had different tools. The men were considered as the hunters and hunted the larger game, whereas the women were considered as the gatherers and gathered the root vegetables. Certain customs and practices are performed by men and women separately, often referred to as Men’s and Women’s Business. These practices have very strict regulations attached.

**ELDERS’ ROLES**

Elders play a special role in the community and clan systems. They ensure law/lore are followed and upheld. The Elders carry out the punishment if and when required. Men and women have equal standing in decision making and each group has its own clearly defined territory recognised by all its members, held in sacred trust from generation to generation and respected by outsiders.
To Choose between **HEAVEN** and **HELL**

While walking down the street one day, a politician was hit by a truck and died.

His soul arrives in heaven and is met by an angel at the entrance.

“Welcome to heaven,” says the angel. “Before you settle in, it seems there is a problem. We seldom see politicians around these parts, you see, so we’re not sure what to do with you.”

“No problem, just let me in,” says the politician.

“Well, I’d like to, but I have orders from higher up. What we’ll do is have you spend a day in hell and one in heaven. Then you can choose where to spend eternity.”

“Really, I have made up my mind. I want to be in heaven,” says the politician.

“I am sorry, but we have our rules,” says the angel.

And with that, the angel escorts him to the elevator and he goes down, down, down to hell. The doors open and he finds himself in the middle of a green golf course. In the distance is a clubhouse and standing in front of it are all his friends and other politicians who had worked with him.

Everyone is very happy and dressed in the finest batik there is. They run to greet him, shake his hand, and reminisce about the good times they had while getting rich at the expense of the people. They play a friendly game of golf and then indulge themselves on lobsters, caviar and the most expensive food there is.

Also present is the devil, who really is a very friendly guy who has a good time dancing and telling jokes. They are having such a good time that before he realises it, it is time to go.

Everyone gives him a hearty farewell and waves while the elevator rises.

The elevator goes up, up and the door reopens on heaven where the angel is waiting for him. “Now, it’s time to visit heaven.”

So, 24 hours pass with the politician joining a group of contented souls moving from cloud to cloud, playing the harp and singing. They have a good time and before he realises it, the 24 hours have gone and the angel returns.

“Well, then, you’ve spent a day in hell and another in heaven. Now choose your eternity.”

The politician doesn’t need to reflect for too long. He answers, “Well, I have never have said it before, I mean heaven has been delightful, but I think I am better off in hell.”

So the angel escorts him to the elevator and he goes down, down, down to hell. Now, the doors of the elevator open and he’s in the middle of a barren land covered with waste and garbage.

He sees all his friends, dressed in rags, picking up the trash and putting it in black bags as more trash falls from above.

The devil comes over to him and puts his arm around his shoulder.

“I don’t understand,” stammers the politician. “Yesterday I was here and there was a golf course and clubhouse, and we ate lobster and caviar, drank champagne, and danced and had a great time. Now there’s just a wasteland full of garbage and my friends look miserable. What happened?”

The devil looks at him, smiles and says, “Yesterday we were campaigning, just like you during an election ... Today you voted.”
**Who are our Visitors?**
*(March 2018 Statistics)*

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<tr>
<th>Language Group</th>
<th>No. of Active visitors</th>
<th>No. of Residents being visited</th>
<th>Language Group</th>
<th>No. of Active visitors</th>
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**HELP! HELP!  Volunteers Needed!**
Do you have any friends who can visit some of these lonely residents?

| Arabic                  | 3 Burwood, Kingswood, Seaforth | Korean | 2 Lindfield |
| CH-Cantonese           | 16 Earlwood, Maroubra(3), Pendle Hill | Latvian | 1 Padstow |
| CH-Mardrain            | 11 Rooty Hill, Roseville(5), Taren Point, Thornleigh(3), West Ryde | Macedonian | 4 Bexley, Bossley Park, North Parramatta, Peakhurst |
| CH-Hokkien             | 1 Bexley | Maltese | 6 Chatswood Lewisham, Maroubra, St Marys(2), South Hurstville |
| CH-Teo-Chow            | 1 Hurstville | Polish | 1 Maroubra |
| Croatian               | 2 Chatswood | Portuguese | 2 Castle Hill, Marrickville |
| Dutch                  | 2 Castle Hill, Penkhurst | Russian | 4 Bexley, Blakehurst, North Sydney, Rushcutters Bay |
| Estonian               | 1 Maroubra | Samoan | 1 Maroubra |
| Farsi                  | 7 Bexley, Hunters Hill, Lindfield, Maroubra, Pennant Hills(5) | Serbian | 2 Ashfield, Chester Hill |
| Finnish                | 1 Botany | Spanish | 3 Bexley, Dural, Penrith |
| German                 | 1 Peakhurst | Tagalog | 1 Castle Hill |
| Hindi                  | 3 Maroubra(2), Strathfield | Tamil | 2 Burwood, Pendle Hill |
| Hungarian              | 3 Dean Park | Ukrainian | 2 Lidcombe, Wahroonga |
| Japanese               | 1 Chatswood | Vietnamese | 5 Greenacre, Hunters Hill, Marrickville(3) |
A NOTE OF THANKS

We would like to welcome our latest community visitors who have joined the Scheme since the last newsletter.

Yuk Mei LAM visiting Chow Cho Poon Nursing Home
Mohamed ZAHRAN visiting Beralan on the Park
Neil RAO visiting Frank Whiddon - Eastern Park Unit
Bebei LI visiting Pennant Hills Nursing Home
XiaoQing HUANG visiting Regis Hurstville
Nathalie DE SOUSA visiting Acacia Centre – Bank sia
Reva RAIS visiting Opal Quakers Hill Nursing Home
Gracille P MELIM DOS SANTOS visiting Acacia Centre – Bank sia
Zhuo WANG, Jo visiting Estia Health Bexley
Le Hang PHAM visiting Beralan on the Park
Masako GUPTA visiting The Whiddon Hornsby
Midori JO visiting Whitehall Aged Care Facility
Asanka HETTIGE visiting Presbyterian Ashleigh Lodge
Stacy HONG visiting Fairlea Harris Park
Mei Mei CHIO visiting Leigh Place
Yoshie HUNTER visiting Ashburn House
Le Khanh Hua DU visiting SummitCare Canley Vale

A special thank you is extended to these new visitors and our existing visitors, who work tirelessly on their own, making a difference in the lives of many lonely, older people. And a big thank you to those special ones who continue their difficult journey when their ‘friend’ passes away.

HUMOUR THERAPY

Woops, Sorry about that

Marvin, was in the hospital on his death bed. The family called Marvin’s Preacher to be with him in his final moments. As the Preacher stood by the bed, Marvin’s condition seemed to deteriorate, and Marvin motioned for someone to quickly pass him a pen and paper. The Preacher quickly got a pen and paper and lovingly handed it to Marvin. But before he had a chance to read the note, Marvin died.

The Preacher feeling that now wasn’t the right time to read it put the note in his jacket pocket. It was at the funeral while speaking that the Preacher suddenly remembered the note. Reaching deep into his pocket the Preacher said “and you know what, I suddenly remembered that right before Marvin died he handed me a note, and knowing Marvin I’m sure it was something inspiring that we can all gain from.

With that introduction the Preacher ripped out the note and opened it. The note said “HEY, YOU ARE STANDING ON MY OXYGEN TUBE!”

Corporate Lesson

Jack and Max are walking to the church for the Sunday prayer. Jack wonders whether it would be alright to smoke while praying.

Max replies: “Why don’t you ask the Priest?”
So Jack goes up to the Priest and asks, “Father, may I smoke while I pray?”
The priest replies, “No, my son, you may not! That’s utter disrespect to our religion.”

Jack goes back to his friend and tells him what the good priest told him.
Max says, “I’m not surprised. You asked the wrong question. Let me try.”

And so Max goes up to the Priest and asks, “Father, may I pray while I smoke?”

To which the priest eagerly replies, “By all means, my son. By all means. You can always pray whenever you want to.”

MORAL of the Story:
“The approval you want depends on the way you ask for it.”

Written & Published by: The Community Visitors Scheme - an Australian Government Initiative, auspiced by Sydney Local Health District.
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