

Christadelphian Care Group *Victoria*
ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09





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Care Group Victoria Committee

Bro. Rex Dupe, Ringwood - Secretary & Treasurer
Sis Helen Smallwood, Clayton - Telephone Counselling Co-ordinator
Sis Donna Walker, Ringwood – Committee Member
Sis Lesley Stevenson, Canterbury – Committee Member
Bro David Islip, Canterbury – Committee Member

Resource Officers

Sis Jo Hill, Blackburn
Sis Suzanne Russell, Ringwood
Sis Vicki Ladson, Ringwood
Sis Yvonne McCallum, Blackburn – Catering
Bro Matthew Waite – Website Management



Mission Statement

“The Victorian Christadelphian Care Group (VCCG) will provide a free scripturally based and confidential range of support services to the Victorian Christadelphian Community to enable members to improve their spiritual, physical and emotional wellbeing”.

VALUES

1. Excellence

The message of God through His Word the Bible is the guiding principle of all activities and counselling undertaken by the Victorian Care Group.

2. Access

The Care Group offers a range of services to Christadelphian families primarily in Victoria but also Australia and worldwide through the Internet and Phone counselling line. We ensure that all members have adequate and continuing training and support.

3. Confidentiality

All members of the Care group are committed to and bound by a Confidentiality Statement. We uphold the confidentiality of any person who contacts us and respect their right to anonymity.

4. Integrity

The members of the Care Group respect the individual, couple and family and uphold the highest ethical and Scriptural standards. All members are bound by a strict Code of Ethics.

VISION

The Victorian Christadelphian Care Group will:

- Encourage the view that seeking assistance when experiencing difficulties is scripturally & spiritually sound.
- Supplement the existing supports available to families, couples and individuals by spouses, family, friends and ecclesias.
- Provide a range of counselling services.
- Maintain an independent financial base.
- Provide a resource file and Library service accessible to the Christadelphian community.
- Develop and implement measurement tools and internal reviews to ensure the highest quality of service is provided.



Secretary and Treasurer's Report

Activities over the past 12 months July 2008 – June 2009

Over the past 12 months the Care Group has continued to offer support and assistance to members of our community who have experienced problems in coping with the stresses and strains of daily living.

The seminars that we have run over this period have been well received and attended. It is pleasing to see that a larger cross section of Ecclesial members have taken an interest in our activities.

Our Website is currently undergoing some changes in order to make it more user friendly and to enable it to be updated on a regular basis. It will also be linked to more sites that offer information on a variety of topics that are related to the Care Group activities.

We would like to make a special mention of the excellent work that has been done on our Web Site over the past 10 years by our Bro Hedley Baum in his role as Web Master.

Bro Hedley has put a great deal of time and effort into ensuring our Website ran smoothly and efficiently for which we are very appreciative. Bro Hedley has now handed over the reins for this work to be carried out by Bro Matt Waite. We would like to thank Bro Matt for taking on this role and we look forward to his continuing support in developing and maintaining our Web Site.

As has now become a regular event, a national Care Group conference was held during the main Christadelphian Conference in Sydney 2008.

One of the items discussed during the Care Group conference was to look at setting up some form of Umbrella Group to bring all the varying Care Groups together under the one structure.

The idea of having a single coordinating body would enable the various groups to have a standard set of aims and objectives along with a standard confidentiality statement and insurance policy.

This envisaged structure would also enable a better sharing of information, resources and in some cases costs. It was acknowledged that this move will take some time to be considered and acted upon and would in no way impinge on the existing activities and organizational structures of the various states.

Further details regarding this move will be distributed as it progresses.



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Whilst the Care Group finances are currently at a reasonable level it should be noted that we have forecast a larger than normal expenditure for the next 12 months.

This larger expenditure is based on using two professional well qualified counselors from the Seventh Day Adventist Church in NSW to run a full day seminar in May next year on Marriage Enrichment.

We have decided to call upon the skills of these counselors in order to address the growing problem of marriage breakdowns in our community. The NSW Support Group has used these counselors on two occasions and highly recommend them to us. We feel this additional expense is well worth while in order to give couples of any age group the tools to help them improve the stability & strength of their marriages.

It should be noted that the Care Group does not have a constitution or an election process and any one who has empathy with this rewarding work and is prepared to abide by the aims and objectives together with our confidentiality agreement is welcome to join the Committee.

All of our plans & arrangements are subject to God's will.

Your Bro in Christ.

Rex Dupé



1) Telephone and direct counselling

The Care Group telephone Care Line is still operating & is used by members of our community to seek information & help in dealing with various issues either where they need some initial information or where they feel they have no other avenue to pursue.

Our trained direct counselors are available to offer assistance to those who need more in depth help than that offered via the Care Line.

Please note: - All approaches to the Care Group are kept in strict confidence. General and brief records are maintained to help identify issues that can be addressed through seminars and other activities aimed at the prevention of problems. These records do not identify any callers. See appendix for the Care Group confidentiality statement.

2) Professional Indemnity Insurance

The Care Group Professional Indemnity Insurance cost to cover our qualified counselors is still our biggest single annual expenditure item. Fortunately we are still able to share this cost with both the SA and QLD Care Groups.

3) Fund Raising

The bulk of our funds continue to come from the Lion's Den Opportunity Shop at Forest Hill and we are very appreciative of the ongoing support we receive from the Management of the shop and from those who donate their time to work in the shop.

We also are very fortunate and extremely grateful for the generous financial support we receive from a number of Ecclesias and individuals within our community.

This support gives us a great deal of encouragement & enables us to, among other things, use the services of interstate brethren and sisters who have expertise in areas that are not available within Victoria to run seminars & courses.

4) Committee Meetings

Six (6) Committee meetings were held and minuted during the past 12 month period with financial reports submitted at each meeting.



5) Newsletters.

Several Newsletters have been circulated throughout the year. These newsletters are designed to give information on past & future activities of the Care Group.

6) Publicity.

The Care Group continues to advertise and promote its activities & services through its Newsletter, via e-mail to those who have requested to go on our e-mail list, What's On & through leaflets & flyers that advertise our seminars & other activities.

7) Resources.

The Care Group has an ever increasing number of books, videos and other resource materials that are available for loan. They cover a broad range of topics including relationships, marriage and parenting, just to name a few. A comprehensive list of books available can be found on the Website, or details can be obtained from Sis Suzanne Russell on 9873-7911.

We are always happy to receive donations of books or recommendations, and try to include a least one book review in newsletters.

Books can be borrowed for a period of 4 weeks, and of course this time can be extended if necessary.

The library system is well used and appreciated by many. Books are on display at any Care Group function or seminar.

8) Seminars

The main seminar held in the past financial year was 'Working in the Lords Vineyard' by Brother Layne Stretton. Bro Layne focused on how to ensure that our ecclesias are places where members are engaged and active with God as the central focus for all thinking. It focused on the principal that it is a relationship with God that transforms one's relationship within an Ecclesial environment. One of the principles of success included finding a way for members to discuss and agree on the purpose of their ecclesia and to find a way to make activities relevant to all members.

Our thanks to Bro Layne for his input into our program. Our thanks also to those who assisted with the catering and contributed to making the Seminar an enjoyable experience for all participants. We pray that God will continue to bless our work and that we will be given the opportunity of continuing the education of our Brethren and Sisters in these important areas prior to the return of the Lord.

9) National Care Group Conference.

Covered in Secretary's comments above.



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10) Mission Statement.

Copies of Our Mission Statement, together with its “Aims and Objectives”, which clearly outlines our “Values” and “Vision” are available through our librarian Sis Suzanne Russell.



Planned Activities (DV) for 2009

1) Additional training for Telephone Counselors

We endeavor to keep the skill levels of our existing telephone counselors up to date to ensure the level of service we offer is to an acceptable standard via the Careline.

2) Seminars

Throughout the past year we have continued in our pro-active approach to seminars where we identify issues or topics that members of our community require information or guidance on and we then arrange for suitable speakers to address those issues.

We always try to use resources within our community, both local and interstate, for our seminars. Where these resources are not available within the community we may call upon outside expertise in line with our scriptural beliefs.

The committee has decided to use the theme of "The Family" for its seminars over this coming year with a focus on 'Raising Boys', Married Couples and our ever growing "Over Sixties" group.

The October 2008 seminar by Brother Gary Steel on the topic of 'Effective Discipleship in today's Time Poor Society' was rescheduled to July 2009.

If anyone has any suggestions for seminar topics or activities for the coming year the committee would like to hear from you.

3) Request for helpers

We are looking for bre and sis to fill a number of roles within the Care Group and would like to hear from anyone who is willing to help. You can do this by contacting a committee member.



Telephone contact and Chat Line service

Over the past year, the counselling arm of the Care Group has again provided support and assistance to a number of Christadelphian families through the services of the chat line, the 24hr phone contact service, face to face counselling and parenting courses.

Our sincere appreciation and thanks go to our webmaster for his work on updating the web site. The web site now offers a wide range of information, resources and links. (to users). The websites of all the Australian Care Groups and Support Services can be accessed through our site thereby coordinating our work and providing valuable scripturally based information for Australia and even the world. The chat line is part of this site and provides a resource through which people can discuss a problem anonymously and know that they will get the appropriate assistance from trained contact workers.

Again the 24 hr confidential phone service has proven to be a very useful tool in alleviating the stresses of callers. It is a first port of call from where we can refer the caller to more long term help or the appropriate immediate resources. All our contact workers are trained and available to lead the caller to a better understanding of their issue, assist them to find useful strategies in dealing with the problem and refer them to appropriate on going supports if necessary.

The face to face counselling provided by qualified counselors has been gratefully accepted by a number of people over the past year. It is amazing to see the power of God work in the lives of His children as they struggle through a problem to a successful outcome.

In 2008 we facilitated the Growing Families Teen parenting course, addressing the problems that can arise as our children enter adolescence and confront stronger peer pressure etc. The course content is based in scripture and covers all aspects of relationships, especially highlighting the need for the couple to be strong and provide strong leadership and spiritual direction to their children.

We are pleased to welcome some new counselors to our group and acknowledge the graduation of these sisters with welfare qualifications. Until Christ returns the need for support will be constantly with us and we would encourage others who are interested to also pursue courses that will assist in meeting the many and varied needs of our brothers and sisters and their families.

I would like to thank the contact workers and counselors who give their time voluntarily in love for their brethren and sisters. I would also like to thank the resource officers who do all the behind the scenes work for seminars, organize



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the library and resources, take the minutes at meetings and keep everything running smoothly.

May the love of God dwell in us all richly as we await the return of Christ.

Sis Helen Smallwood



Appendix

Confidentiality Statement

The Principles of Confidentiality

Your personal integrity is the integrity of the Caregroup.

All that one hears in the course of one's duties is in confidence, and under no circumstances should the name of the specific details of a telephone call or a face to face meeting be disclosed without the prior consent of the client.

Discussion with a supervisor or a support person should avoid identifying information.

Commitment of Confidentiality

In the sight of God, I solemnly affirm and declare that, within the Principles of Confidentiality expressed above and the Code of Ethics, I will not disclose any communication made to me while engaged in any aspect of the Christadelphian Caregroup (Victoria). I recognise that I am released from this commitment in situations which are life - threatening.

Signed Date

When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow.

It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it. (Ecclesiastes 5 v 4-5).