



Chief Executive Officer's Column

Welcome to the May 2006 Moreland Hall Newsletter.

The time since our last newsletter has gone quickly, with a number of exciting prospects for the immediate future.

We are earnestly seeking extensions of funding for our Intensive Supported Playgroup, which was commenced with generous support from the William Buckland Foundation. The Playgroup was funded for an initial two years from September 2004 and has filled an important gap in service provision for parents with an addiction who have young children. The Playgroup has enabled us to support parents who have addiction issues, but also has enabled us to provide a learning and supportive environment for their children. We are hoping fervently that additional funding can be secured before the program ends in September 2006.

With a number of other Alcohol and other Drug Agencies, Moreland Hall has been asked to participate in a Department of Human Services (DHS) reference group, which is seeking to develop a new drug treatment sector blueprint. This blueprint will be developed by taking into account the findings from the DHS Service System Review, changing drug trends and more recent Government policy directions.

The process of the Quality Accreditation for Moreland Hall is beginning in earnest with all staff joining various working groups to assess the current systems and processes within the agency to ensure that we operate within a quality framework. Accreditation is an opportunity for us to review many of our current practices and processes and improve services for both clients and staff.

The Board at its meeting on Monday 9th May adopted a revised set of Board Policies and Procedures. This revised set of policies has updated the policies that were adopted in 1999.

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INSIDE:
The Moreland Hall
Seminar Series Program!
Our own
Commonwealth Games
Baton Relay
Representative!

Chief Executive Officer's Column

One of the changes to these policies, which you will notice in day to day operations, is that my title changes from Executive Director to Chief Executive Officer. The title of Chief Executive Officer better reflects my day to day role of managing Moreland Hall, rather than the Executive Director title, which refers to my role on the Governance Board. This is a cosmetic change; all my day to day responsibilities and duties will stay the same.



Late breaking news! Following is an article regarding the National Alcohol and Drug Awards. We have recently been informed that Moreland Hall has been short listed as finalists for the Excellence in Treatment Award. We nominated the Intensive Support Service (ISS) for the award. Keep your fingers crossed, the Awards are announced on June 23 in Sydney.

Laurence Alvis - Chief Executive Officer

National Alcohol and Drug Awards

Moreland Hall has submitted nominations for these awards in two categories: Excellence in Treatment and Excellence in Prevention.

We have nominated the Intensive Support Service (ISS) for the Excellence in Treatment Award. This award recognises excellence in the provision of services for the treatment of any type of drug dependence. Any treatment provider or intervention is eligible and will be assessed against the following criteria:

Judging criteria — that the service:

- is based on current best practice for client care and outcomes in drug and alcohol treatment;
- has been evaluated and found to be effective in reducing or stopping alcohol or other drug use, reducing criminal activity, improving physical and

emotional health, improving social functioning and relationships, or making meaningful contributions to the community;

- is integrated into the drug and alcohol sector;
- consults with clients about quality improvement and client satisfaction;
- has well developed links with the broader community; and provides staff with professional supervision and supports their ongoing development.

We have nominated the Intensive Playgroup for the Excellence in Prevention Award. This award recognises a program, policy or resource that makes a significant contribution to the prevention of any type of drug use or drug-related harm.

This award is not just limited to alcohol and other drug specific interventions, it includes broad based prevention programs aimed at addressing risk and protective factors and building resilience, which can be demonstrated to impact on alcohol and other drug use.

Judging criteria — that the program or policy:

- Is based on good practice and/or research (is evidence-based, is appropriately targeted and sustainable); based on a demonstrated need;
- Was developed with the target audience and other key stakeholders; and
- Was evaluated and found to have a measurable impact.

Laurence Alvis



Reflection: “Just compassion”

from ourselves, afraid, overwhelmed by what we cannot control.

Remember the Autumn leaves.

Look at the deciduous trees.

See how they gently release their leaves to turn inward for the Winter to renew their strength before reaching out again in growth and shelter...

In the life of each person the same path is possible, but it takes courage to hold gently parts of our lives and then let them go—for a season—so that our strength can be renewed.

You may have heard it said, “Love others as much as you love yourself”.

To love others, to be just and compassionate to others, we must be just and compassionate to ourselves also. That is the love we will then have to give.

Life is lived, aware that joys and sorrow; pain and pleasure; death and life; hope and despair are an integral part of our journey and the journey of others.

Sometimes we are reluctant or we struggle to live with these opposites. We may seek to resolve them too quickly, or cover them over with all manner of things – perpetual helpfulness, cheerfulness, perfection ... whatever!

However, forgiving, believing, hoping and enduring are fraught with problems when hatred and violence abound.

Sometimes it is necessary to identify these things and then leave them behind.

Sometimes it is necessary that we cannot control or resolve or solve all things.

Sometimes it is necessary to recognise it is time to let go.

Sometimes it is necessary for a season.

Reverend Rosemary Carter

In recent weeks there have been a number of public events that have been quite full of emotional tensions – from the ANZAC remembrances of war and lives lost or changed forever, through to the death and the very difficult rescue of the Beaconsfield miners. We have been disturbed by the intrusion of cameras into peoples lives; the critical judgements by politicians on the lives of indigenous people who are struggling; and the troubles for our near neighbours in East Timor and Indonesia.

We are aware of a tiredness – even a malaise – within our own selves. We are concerned by the difficulties in people’s lives. We may be distracted

To order any of Moreland Hall’s Drug & Alcohol resources, refer to the order form enclosed with this Newsletter and

Fax to: 9384 8891

or

Send to :

**Education & Training
26 Jessie Street
Moreland 3058**



Go to www.morelandhall.org to print out more copies of the order form

New Board of Governance Member Profiles



Ian Claessen joined Moreland Hall's Board of Governance in April 2006

"I am a Certified Practising Accountant (CPA) with a background of 29 years in external audit (27 years with the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, followed by 2 years with a private accounting firm). Having worked in hundreds of organisations across the state, I have specialised in a form of auditing known as "Performance Auditing" and, in doing so, have had considerable experience in the health portfolio among many others.

Since then I have been working in a research capacity with the Victorian Public Accounts and Estimates for the past 2 years, covering a wide range of areas including the activities of the Department of Human Services.

I am committed to making a difference and serving the Board of Governance to the best of my ability."

Ian Claessen



Dr. Jan Brace-Govan joined Moreland Hall's Board of Governance in April 2006

"Originally from Edinburgh, Scotland I spent several years working in London before I migrated to Australia. I landed in Perth and wondered why it was necessary to have a 'gate' attached to the front of cars and other vehicles, but my journey across the Nullarbor on a bus explained all that. I spent some time in Tasmania, Sydney and up north in Queensland, but I settled in Melbourne. I love the changes the seasons here bring and all the other aspects that make living here so marvellous.

I come to the Moreland Hall Board with several different experiences that I hope will be of use to the organisation. Currently I lecture in Not for Profit Marketing at Monash University at both Undergraduate and Graduate levels and I also supervise research. However, I began my career

here in Australia as a Sociologist with a strong interest in issues around social justice and disadvantage. Since then, through my research I have 'travelled' through three different disciplines, the last one is Marketing. Between Sociology and Marketing I have also trained as a Program Evaluator. One of my first research projects explored the management styles of local community level sports organisations, another looked at women's experience of physical activity, and other projects evaluated the delivery of education. Through much of this I have sat on various Management Committees and Boards in an effort to bring together my interests in community and participation. I hope that this blend of theory and practice will be of use to Moreland Hall."

Dr. Jan Brace-Govan



New Staff Profiles



Nessá Pastoors—HR Manager joined Moreland Hall in February 2006

“My employment at the end of February had a very unique commencement. I spent the first 2 hours in a car with work colleagues I had never met before, travelling two hours away from my comfort zone (home sweet home) towards Queenscliff for a 2 day strategic planning retreat with the Moreland Hall Management Team. Surprisingly enough after this ordeal I turned up the very next day to the office ready for work.

I have worked in a variety of industries: Arts, Sales, NFP, IT, Building & Construction, and Security in the past. It has been particularly the past 3+ years that my career steered towards the Human Resources field. I truly realised my passion over the past few years for finding that balance between business objectives and people’s needs, at times though this can be quite hard to achieve but I enjoy the challenge.

Currently I am working Monday-Wednesday with

Moreland Hall and Thursday-Friday I work as the HR Supervisor at Orchestra Victoria.

I moved to Melbourne 6 years ago from Sydney so I am now officially a true Melbournite. Outside of work I keep myself entertained with the complexities of golf and the simplicities of chocolate.

Thank you to all I have met thus far in providing me with a warm welcome to Moreland Hall. I look forward to meeting the rest of the team over the next couple of weeks.”

Nessá Pastoors



John Cronin—Senior Education & Training Officer joined Moreland Hall in February 2006

“My name is John Cronin, but my family and friends know me as Johnny. I was born in Dublin & immigrated to Australia in 1986, so this October I will have been here 20 years! I have worked in helping professions since 1988.

I worked as a spinal technician at the Austin Hospital from 1988 - 1993. In 1993 I completed my RACS Certificate (Residential & Community Services). This enabled me to start working as a youth worker, a profession that had always appealed to me.

In 1994 I started working at Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre (MJJC). My role evolved from running a music program for the 17-21 year old males in the Senior Youth Training Centre to supervising the Exit and Maximum Security Unit until 1999.

In 1999 I started an Arts degree at La Trobe University majoring in Legal Studies. I had this strange notion that I was going to study Law - 2 years at university soon sorted that out, & I moved across into Social Work! Once graduating in 2003, I worked for JSS with the Inside Families Project - providing support & counselling for prisoners & their families dealing with a range of issues including drugs & alcohol.

My other big passion in life (aside from soccer & cooking) is music! I have been playing music for the last 20 years & will be releasing a CD later this year.”

John Cronin



Intensive Playgroup— 'Hello' from Hoadley Hall

"As I take my leave from working at Moreland Hall it is a ideal opportunity to reflect on the last year.

It can be surprising, with reflection, to consider what the playgroup has achieved so far this year. Below is only a snapshot of what the playgroup families, Lis Steen (Therapeutic Playgroup Worker) and I have undertaken .

- The outdoor area has been completed and how much we all love using it. Even on cooler days we wrap the children up and venture outside. It's great for working those big and small muscles.
- Christmas time was a great opportunity for the parents to produce and circulate their own newsletter. We also held a successful Christmas party which most of the families participated in and generously brought wondrous food. Santa and

his reindeer were happy too!

- Lis Steen and I attended the APSAD Conference in November 2005 to participate in the Poster Presentation. Though this conference had a "scientific" focus the playgroup presentation was well received.

- A baby playgroup was introduced at Moreland Hall for mothers with infants under 12 months. Most women with children under 12 months do not participate in mothers groups, which are organised through the Maternal and Child Health Service. Under 12 months is a crucial time for attachment and bonding and mothers can begin to do this by playing and spending time with their infant in a environment which is conducive to this.

- On Monday and Friday we have two consistent playgroups which are always well attended.
- On Friday 5th May the playgroup families enjoyed a great day out at

the Bundoora Animal Farm. It was lovely to see the children and their parents enjoying being with the animals – touching and feeding them – the laughter and joy at such a simple pleasure. The staff who joined the families –Lis Steen, Dorothy Minca (Counsellor) and myself also had a ball!"

Catriona Good—Intensive Playgroup Coordinator

Catriona left Moreland Hall in May 2006 to take on a new role. We thank her for her fantastic contribution to Playgroup and wish her well.



For more information about the Intensive Playgroup Program please contact Lis Steen on 9386 2876 on Mondays, Thursdays or Fridays

Sally Laurie—Reflections on leaving



Sally Laurie—Education & Training Manager left in May 2006 after 10 years with Moreland Hall

“It was the garden and the people that first attracted me to Moreland Hall. The garden in those days was rather a wilderness – very unlike the tidy, well tended grounds of today. The staff were represented by Colleen Pearce, the Executive Director and Kathryn Kemp, the Manager of Clinical Services. I liked them both immediately since, despite what I perceived to be my short-comings – a complete lack of any knowledge of the drug and alcohol field being one of them – they seemed only to see my positive qualities and particularly valued my background in Education.

A conversation with Kathryn Kemp further persuaded me that this was the place for me. I asked the all too predictable question expressed by those who have no knowledge of the field – “Isn’t it rather depressing to work with people who have addictions?” Her answer was one which

explained addictions and drug use in terms of what it is to be human, and how we all can use drugs well and not so well and that we all may need help with our drug use at some point during our lives. From that point on I stopped thinking in terms of them – the drug users, and us – the ‘normal’ people.

I should explain where Moreland Hall was at in 1997. Colleen Pearce had the challenge of keeping Moreland Hall afloat – it had been in considerable financial difficulties after the closure of the hospital and the redevelopment of drug services in Victoria. Colleen Pearce recognised the need for change, as did Kathryn Kemp, an independent thinker if ever there was one. Colleen had the complete support of a Board who as well as having a commitment to the work of Moreland Hall also believed in going out on a limb to ensure its future.

One of these risky propositions was in establishing an Education and Training Unit to enable the organization to move into new areas within the drug and alcohol field and to obtain new sources of funding. That was where I came in.

Once I had determined that Moreland Hall was where I wanted to go now that I had freed myself from secondary school education as a career, I set out to win the position, and, it was my good fortune that I succeeded. The next



Sally Laurie & Moreland Hall staff

challenge was to work with Kathryn in determining the role of Education and Training. We were greatly assisted in the first and succeeding years by the findings and recommendations of the Penington Report which had been released in April 1996.

I well remember listening to David Penington saying that all we needed to do in relation to the so-called ‘drug problem’ was to ‘change the culture’. I was inspired to think that Education and Training could assist in doing just that. More to the point was that the Victorian Government dedicated \$100 million over four years to their Turning the Tide strategy, the most comprehensive cross departmental drug strategy that any jurisdiction in Australia has embarked on.

We were quickly involved in a Department of Education and Training initiative to develop, trial and then roll out parent drug education programs across Victoria. Later this expanded to bi-lingual drug education programs which led to Education and Training’s continuing involvement with and commitment to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Victoria.

Hume Youth & Parent Drug Services (HYP-D) Report



Pat's Bus at the Craigieburn Festival

“The Hume Youth and Parent Drug Services (HYP-D Services) project was funded by the National Illicit Drug Strategy in 2004 and is supported by a variety of stakeholders in the Hume City region. In December 2005 the program was funded for another 2 years.

Initially a reference group was set up to guide the provision of an enhanced service to young people and their families on drug related issues in City of Hume. Research commissioned by the Hume City Council identified Craigieburn as being a ‘hotspot’ for the use of illicit substances such as cannabis, amphetamines and other ‘party drugs’ by young people and therefore this area was chosen to pilot this demonstration project.

The Hume Youth and Parent Drug Service (HYP-D

Services), currently consists of two workers – Leonie Smith (full-time) and Kareen Walka (part-time) sharing the dual roles of youth and families counsellor and community development worker.

The HYP-D team have access to office space out at Craigieburn three days a week (Wednesday/Thursday/Friday), and in Broadmeadows on Tuesdays (Kareen) and Wednesdays (Leonie).

Our roles involve providing counselling support and engaging in the development of youth focused projects adopting a preventative and harm minimisation approach. In addition, both members of the team facilitate group work programs targeting substance use issues and co-conduct forums/education sessions with other Craigieburn stakeholders such as the Police, local schools, the Youth Centre as well as with other local agencies.

We work with young people up to the age of 25 and their families who reside in or have strong links to the Hume city area.

For example, recently we co-facilitated the “Party Safe” program with the Craigieburn Secondary School nurse – a series of brief workshops for year 9 students. The program aims to provide students with an interactive and fun way to address some of the harms that occur when young people go to parties or are out socially.

We will also be presenting the HYP-D program at the International Youth & Drugs Conference in Sydney in May this year.”

*Leonie Smith
HYP-D Counsellor*



Leonie & Kareen

To make a referral to HYP-D or for further information please contact Leonie Smith or Kareen Walka on 9386 2876

A day in the life of Gwenyth Williams staff member—Mario Canas

“BEEP BEEP! (alarm) Mario is up within seconds! BEEP BEEP! He never misses the starting gun that marks a new day! BEEP BEEP BEEP! Well...the snooze button on the clock can get the better of him sometimes, but who could blame him, its 5am!

Upon awakening this seemingly normal looking man undergoes a major transformation. The night before he was Mario, father of two, relaxed, take it easy, Mario. To a beanie donning, denim jacket wearing- with the collar facing up- energizer bunny: EVEREADY MARIO!

However this EVEREADY MARIO is more of a mindset than a particular dress code, for what would all that mean if he did not actively communicate, as well as wear his youthful nature? Kinda like what the ‘S’ slapped on Superman’s chest would end up meaning, (Say who?’ or possibly Someone but this guy, please!’)

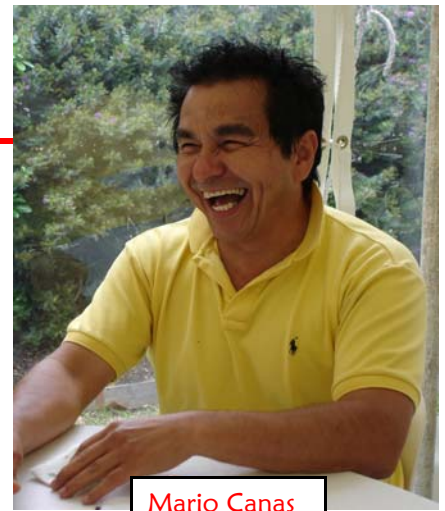
EVEREADY MARIO is a Senior Youth Residential Alcohol and Other Drug Worker at Moreland Hall. Don’t let this name put you off though, its just a technical term, besides its not like he wears a diamond incrusted, solid gold pin with his position engraved in it. And when you think about it, this eight word tongue

twister, when abbreviated spells: SYRAODW ...see, not so intimidating sounding when put like that (quite dorky sounding actually). Which is exactly the type of atmosphere Moreland hall promotes (not the dorky one), the active, energetic, friendly one.

On any average day, if you walk into Moreland Hall you probably won’t even find Mario or the clients there, as they’d be at the beach, the pool, the gym, and the park. And if by some luck you do find them indoors they would be playing table tennis, painting or cooking. A whole day is never spent in front of the TV, and if the clients aren’t awake by 10am, he wakes them up himself!

Being a SYRAODW isn’t all fun and games though, it also stressful and requires a lot of intellectual autonomy, as the table tennis, the painting and all the other activities always involve the important ingredients and principles of harm minimisation, relapse prevention and general discussion on drugs and how they effect young peoples’ lives.

Mario has himself said that his past study opportunities have given him the tools to effectively engage in such discussions, allowing him to be in a position to provide valuable information and support.



Mario Canas

Some of these past studies include a community development degree, studying psychology in El Salvador, and a post graduate diploma in drugs and alcohol.

His studies have also allowed him to deliver better services to culturally diverse clients, as he claimed: “Sometimes drug treatments and interventions tend to be culturally insensitive as they are mostly based on mainstream views that overlook crucial and culturally specific values, opinions, views, morals and social understanding”.

So I suppose being a SYRAODW in general, can now take on another meaning: Sensitive, Youthful, Rad, Always ready, Open, Diverse and Wicked. The term’s definition has evolved, as has the human being. And who knows what greater evolution this field has yet to take on, in the near future.”

*Mario Canas—
Mario began his new role as
Gwenyth Williams
Coordinator in May 2006*

Sally Laurie—Reflections on leaving continued

In the meantime the rest of the organization was also involved in a race to diversify its services so as to embrace the opportunities presented by Turning the Tide. As well as tendering for its own traditional services in Counselling and Withdrawal, it sought and won tenders to provide new drug education and counselling services in four prisons across Victoria. Education and Training found itself designing a number of prison drug education programs and then seeking funding for video resources to assist with these programs. This was an exhilarating time when it seemed that anything was possible and that Moreland Hall had the capacity or could achieve the capacity through its links and partnerships to deliver any services in the alcohol and other drugs field. Education and Training grew

during this time, and we were fortunate then and continue now, in attracting outstanding staff who did much to cement the reputation we were gaining for high quality educational services. It was during this time that Janet Farrow came to take over leadership of Moreland Hall and streamline our services.

The high point of Education and Training occurred during Janet Farrow's tenure. The ABCD Parenting Young Adolescents Program which we designed along with our partners the Victorian Parenting Service, was extraordinarily successful and evaluated positively being delivered to over 1000 families in 6 languages across Victoria.

I am leaving at a time when, under Laurence Alvis's leadership, the organization is in good hands and it is time

for me to seek out the next direction for my career. I have been proud of being part of this remarkable organisation's history and proud to represent a group of staff who, despite the changes to Moreland Hall have been constant in their passion for their work and commitment to the clients. What attracted me to the place at the outset has remained despite the cosmetic changes represented by the taming of the garden. The constants have been Moreland Hall's willingness to try new and better ways of delivering services, its dedication to achieve the best outcomes for its clients, and its leadership in working for the betterment of the service system. I hope I have contributed to this."

Sally Laurie



Stay posted for more details about
Moreland Hall's new
Support Services Contact Card!

A wallet size fold-out card listing a
range of support services for
clients of Alcohol & other Drug
Services

Seminar Series 2006

Next Seminar:
30th June
“Post release support for prisoners and their families”

Presented by:
Melanie Field-Pimm
Family & Children’s Services Co-ordinator
VACRO

Call 9386 2876 to register

register

- all seminars run between 12.30 – 1.30pm on the specified dates
- refreshments between 12.00-12.30pm
- to register phone (03) 9386 2876 or email seminarseries@morelandhall.org



26 Jessie Street Moreland VIC 3058
 phone (03) 9386 2876 fax (03) 9384 8891
 www.morelandhall.org

These **FREE** seminars provide factual and up to date information on a diverse range of topics and issues that relate to the Alcohol and Other Drugs sector.



LUNCHTIME seminar series '06

		MARCH 31	APRIL 28	MAY 26	JUNE 30
<p>LUNCHTIME seminar series 12.30-1.30pm</p> <p>OUTLINE OF TOPICS AND SPEAKERS FOR THE LUNCHTIME SEMINAR SERIES 2006</p>	<p>AN INTENSIVE SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS (AOD) CLIENTS WITH COMPLEX NEEDS</p> <p>An overview of the model developed at Moreland Hall for supporting clients with complex needs and what has been learnt from eighteen months of practice.</p>	<p>EXPLORING THE MEDICAL RESPONSE TO MANAGING WITHDRAWAL</p> <p>An exploration of the impact of medications as a first line nursing response to withdrawal management.</p>	<p>DEPRESSION AND ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS USE – THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP</p> <p>This presentation will explore the relationship between depression, anxiety and alcohol and drug use, with a focus on young people.</p>	<p>POST RELEASE SUPPORT FOR PRISONERS AND THEIR FAMILIES</p> <p>A discussion of the difficulties experienced by prisoners and their families when a prisoner is released from prison and returns to the community.</p>	
	<p>Simone Miller Intensive Support Service Clinician Moreland Hall</p> <p>Fiona Lewis Intensive Support Service Clinician Moreland Hall</p>	<p>Rose McCrohan Co-ordinator Lesley-Anne Curran Place (Adult Withdrawal Service) Moreland Hall</p>	<p>Helen Rimington Senior Consultant, Education, Training and Group Work Drummond Street Relationship Centre</p>	<p>Melanie Field-Pimm Family and Children’s Services Co-ordinator VACRO (Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders)</p>	
<p>HUME YOUTH AND PARENTS DRUG SERVICES PROGRAM – ONE YEAR ON</p> <p>An overview of the development and achievements of Moreland Hall’s community development model for supporting young people and families dealing with AOD issues.</p>	<p>SUPPORTING AOD CLIENTS TO ENHANCE THEIR PARENTING SKILLS</p> <p>The presentation will include a brief introduction to the Parenting Support Toolkit developed to assist AOD workers in addressing the vital role of parenting with their clients.</p>	<p>NO TO VIOLENCE (NTV) – WORKING WITH MEN WHO ARE VIOLENT TOWARDS FAMILY MEMBERS</p> <p>This presentation will focus on working with men to assist them to change and end their violent behaviour against family members.</p>	<p>THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN CLINICAL PRACTICE: COUNTERACTING THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF COMPASSION FATIGUE, FEAR AND BURN-OUT</p> <p>A narrative seminar highlighting the challenges of providing AOD treatment to adolescents presenting with histories of trauma, abuse and neglect, with particular reference to strategies used to develop ‘resilience’.</p>	<p>AN OVERVIEW OF WORKING WITH MANDATORY CLIENTS.</p> <p>This presentation will look at new legislation, changes to practice, providing an understanding of the different orders set out in the Children and Young Person’s Act.</p>	
<p>Leonie Smith AOD Clinician Moreland Hall</p> <p>Karen Walka AOD Clinician Moreland Hall</p>	<p>Kylie Burke Senior Project Officer Victorian Parenting Centre</p>	<p>Tony Kelleher Senior Community Educator and Behavioural Change Group facilitator Life Works</p>	<p>John Quiroga Alcohol and Drug Youth Consultant Moreland Hall</p>	<p>Stuart Oldfield Unit Manager Barwon Child Protection Service</p>	

Commonwealth Games Baton Relay Highlights!

“Late last year my friend Lisa, told me that she had nominated me to carry the baton in the Commonwealth Games Baton Relay and gave me a copy of what she had written. I was very flattered, and embarrassed.

I have been a foster carer for Berry Street for the last 7 years and have cared for approx. 40 children from the ages of 3 months to 14 years. During this time there have been many highlights and a few disasters. I am also on a few committees for playgroup and youth outreach.

On the day of the relay, 14th March 2006, I had to get dressed in my uniform and meet at the Olympic

Village at 8am. We were briefed on what would happen during the morning and were introduced to the other baton holders, as well as all the support people. We were taught the three

to all the children and the crowd was growing all the time. A mini bus took us to where we were to receive the baton from the previous runner and the Police briefed us on the safety aspects as well as telling us to smile and have fun.



So many people came to watch, there were families whose children I had looked after from as far back as 9 years ago. My whole family was there and many of my friends. I was very nervous but once we started walking and everyone was watching and calling out to us the excitement took over!

most important things: hold the baton up, smile and wave.

It was an amazing day and one that I will remember forever.”

The atmosphere was just amazing, someone was handing out Australian flags

Lis Steen-Therapeutic Playgroup worker



Flowers in bloom at Jessie St



Veggie patch at LACP



Easter Reflection

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Lis carrying the baton