



newsletter

October to December

EMPOWERING THE COMMUNITY THROUGH ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Reflecting back over another busy and demanding year I am again struck by the dedication, capability and tenacity of our wonderful team of staff and volunteers. Like many organisations we have experienced our share of challenges and uncertainties over the past 12 months but for us these have provided times for constructive reflection and assessment, exploration of new and creative business approaches as well as the redesign and implementation of operational changes. We are undertaking some positive and exciting activities and new ventures, which would not have been possible without every member of the team pulling together in the same direction – thank you for a great outcome; we have much to look forward to in the months ahead. The following is a brief summary of some of our achievements and new initiatives that we have undertaken during the year: Major reform was undertaken to set the Eastern Transport Register (ETR) on a pathway to self sustainability. We initially undertook a review of the operating business model with a particular interest on the increasing costs of maintenance, repair and insurance. As a result

we changed the vehicle loan arrangements, updated the fee structure, rented new warehouse premises in Croydon and relocated all vehicles to these new premises. With staff presence in the warehouse on a day to day basis we have seen significant improvement in the care, maintenance and security of our vehicles, better management of vehicle borrowing and closer monitoring of the operating costs, which have now been contained. We have done a lot of work on the “Eastern Get About Transport service,” a new transport option being developed with our partners from EACH, Scope and Yarra Ranges Council. The aim of the project is to provide alternative community transport through better utilization of existing community vehicles during downtime and on planned scheduled trips. The Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation provided funding to undertake the testing and initial pilot phases of the service and Partners in Recovery has provided funding support to help design the services so that they are accessible for and trusted by people with chronic and complex mental health illnesses. There is still an amount of work to be done and additional funds are

EASTERN VOLUNTEERS

Offering volunteer recruitment and training for volunteers and community organisations and volunteer opportunities to the business sector and its employees. Providing volunteer assisted transport to HACC eligible clients who live in the municipalities of Maroondah, Whitehorse and the Yarra Ranges.

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required to trial the program throughout 2016. As you will be aware the major component of the services we deliver under the HACC program will be transferred from the State government to the Federal government on the 1st July 2016. While the two levels of government are still working through the details of the transition we have been working to improve our corporate structure and operational processes to increase efficiency and cost effectiveness so that we can offer improved transport services to more HACC eligible clients. The pressure for change was inevitable and the challenges for us have been huge. While we undertook extensive consultation over a number of months prior to implementing the changes in October the process has been far from plain sailing. However we have welcomed and listened to the feedback from our clients and drivers and we have made modifications to achieve a smoother transition. "Empowering Volunteers for Life" is a new initiative to assist people who may require additional support before they can undertake volunteering opportunities. with a disability or from a different cultural background who may not be ready to undertake volunteering opportunities (or indeed are workplace ready). The program, which received a funding grant from the Helen MacPherson Smith Trust, will assist participants with social and workplace skills. The VIO Toolkit, Consultancy and Shared Services Model is being developed with funding support from the Federal government to develop an IP based system, comprising volunteer management and corporate governance tools, templates and support services for use by NFP agencies and volunteer managers. Our corporate and skilled volunteering program has gone

from strength to strength with 800 corporate volunteers giving 5000 hours of their time to support community organisations across a range of activities. We understand the benefits of partnering and cooperating with community organisations and the business sector to deliver community service programs and develop innovative business opportunities so if you are a like minded organisations please join with us in 2016 to explore new ways of doing business while increasing support to those vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our community. Finally, on behalf of our Chairman, Dr Mehdi Taghian and Board members I wish you a safe and enjoyable Christmas period and a prosperous and fun-filled 2016.

**Vic North
General Manager**

The EV Website

After several months of work by EV staff, we are very pleased to announce that we have updated the website. Have a look at www.easternvolunteers.org.au and explore the site. We are aiming to provide clearer information for the community, and for people who want to become a volunteer. There are pages dedicated to corporate volunteering and the training calendar will be loaded before the end of the year with an automated booking process. Its an exciting , informative update for the organisation.



The new website can also take donations. Please go to; <http://easternvolunteers.org.au/donations/>

Transport: Suzanne Phoenix



The Transport Services team has continued to provide a vital service to some of the most vulnerable

people who live in the municipalities of Whitehorse, Maroondah and Yarra Ranges, those who are frail aged and people with disabilities. The Social Support funded service of Community Transport assisted over 685 people with transport, travelling over 600,000 kilometres and delivering nearly 18,000 trips. This service enabled people to stay connected to their local communities, to participate in social, shopping and recreational activities along with attending important medical and health related appointments to improve their quality of life.

The Transport Services team is a remarkable mix of employees and volunteers, nearly 150 in total, with the on the road drivers solely made up of volunteers. With the year drawing to a close I would just like to say a huge thankyou to every one of our volunteers for their contribution.

I look forward to seeing you all in 2016 and continuing to assist people to stay connected with their local community.

Community Engagement: Tara Cantwell



The Vision for our Community Engagement team is to *be leaders in a community where volunteering is highly valued*

and easily accessible by all. We work on this vision by using the principles from the IAP2 public participation spectrum within the context of community participation. These principles are to inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower our community around all matters volunteering. We have worked tirelessly towards this vision with some highlights and challenges but always with much appreciation for the volunteers working with high levels of skill and passion towards our vision. These volunteers have roles as interviewers / referral consultants, administration support and project officers and whose work enables many others in our community to experience the positive outcomes of volunteering. Some of our community engagement activity this year has included;

Staff changes; Farewelling Mary French and welcoming Ruth Morgan

Department of Social Services funding for an innovative toolkit project and core funding
Yarra Ranges Council and Eastern Volunteers joint conference

Titled, 'The power of volunteering, give happy, live happy'

Empowering volunteers for life

Thanks to the generosity of the Helen McPherson Smith Trust, Yarra Ranges Council and Whitehorse council we're developing a process to better support disadvantaged volunteers **Innovative workshops, training and Corporate volunteering.**

Stay tuned for more excitement next year!

Corporate Volunteering

Julie Tang

This year has been another year of growth for our corporate volunteering programme. Over 800 volunteers from corporate clients (and other groups) have given their time to volunteer for once-off projects to support our community organisations. The volunteering activities have included painting working bees, sorting donated items, making up show bags and helping at numerous events which included the Spring Racing Carnival and the Royal Melbourne Show. Although these corporate volunteers were only able to offer one day of their time, their impact was still significant.

The corporate volunteers gave 5000 hours of their time which equated to a financial contribution of more than \$100,000 for this year alone.

More importantly, this figure does not take into account the positive affect that the volunteers had on the community organisations and their own communities at large.

To sum up the year and our programme, I think Helen Keller said it best;

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much".

In July this year we farewelled long time employee Mary French.

Mary had been with EV for an incredible 11 years in many different capacities. She has been coordinator of the Eastern Transport Register, Volunteer Engagement Officer and onsite personal trainer. Mary will be missed in the workplace for her wicked sense of humour, her determination to turn us all into fitness buffs and her desire to ensure all people felt supported and welcome. Thank you Mary, your passion and energy was an inspiration to many.

Eastern Get About – Upcoming trial of a new supported community transport service

Eastern Volunteers, in partnership with SCOPE, each and Yarra Ranges Council plans to trial a new transport service called **Eastern Get About**, assisting people to be mobile and independent in their local community and have an enjoyable and active life.

Eastern Get About (EGA) plans to run a limited trial in early 2016 offering supported community transport for people who need assistance travelling in the Knox, Maroondah, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges areas. The proposed service intends to accommodate anyone who is transport disadvantaged and needs support when travelling; this includes youth and the elderly, people with a mental health illness and carers. EGA plans to provide services on a fee-paying basis to recover operating costs, with Volunteer staff assisting to keep services

cost-effective. Dependent on the outcomes of the trial, the service plans to commence in mid 2016.

You can drive a change in community transport

EGA is now seeking people to volunteer either as drivers or trip companions as part of the trial. We're looking for people who are keen to help, have a friendly professional approach and the ability to empathise and support passengers. You will need to be physically fit, hold a full car drivers license and have the confidence to drive a variety of vehicles including a 12 seater minibus.

Volunteers for the pilot will receive on the job training and extensive accredited training. This role would especially suit anyone who is seeking to develop experience in the community sector and it can be linked to formal study.



EGA is being established with funding assistance from The Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation.

To find out more about Eastern Get About or the volunteer positions, please contact:

Ms Kylie Suich, EGA Project Coordinator. MB: 0498 843 175 or EM: info@easterngetabout.org.au

I am not your typical volunteer driver!

By Kristi Falconer



Independence and mobility are things we take for granted. It gives us freedom to go where we want, when we want. As I became an adult, my grandparents went from being relatively independent, through various stages of dependency. Many people freely gave their time to help my grandparents get about. The local Probus dine out group and scrabble group would pick up Mumma and take her to events. The music appreciation friends would drive Pop to their sessions, if necessary. A stranger even drove Pop home on a hot day

when he was walking locally and had heat exhaustion.

Independence is very important to me. It gives people freedom and keeps the world open to them. Without independence, our world becomes very small and isolated. Small tasks become cumbersome. Larger tasks become stressful events. Even organising to meet friends can become too difficult

So when the opportunity to volunteer arose, Eastern Volunteers was the natural choice for me. Mumma used to drive for Meals on Wheels, despite her physical disability (she drove a modified car). She used EV transport when she gave up driving. This gave her ability to get about without having to always rely on a family member. It also meant that she could go out without being accountable to someone else.

So here I am, a year on from starting at EV. Still driving people around so others have some independence. I am not the typical EV driver. My current career is in financial modelling, pricing and regulation. My hobbies include dancing, knitting, patchwork and chocolate. Now you know why I chose driving. I know my time volunteering is making a significant difference to people.

The Festive Season

Transport Services will be closed from Monday 21st December 2015 to Friday 8th January 2016.

EV will be closed for business from Thursday 24th December 2015 through to Wednesday 6th January 2016 inclusive.