



Can you believe this year is almost over and 2009 is just around the corner? It has been a very positive year for the ATCA with much to celebrate. The highlights were:

In May we hosted a TC stream at the Winter School Symposium and we were excited to see more than 100 delegates in attendance.

Funding for *The National Standards for Therapeutic Communities (Alcohol and Other Drug)* and a *Therapeutic Communities Training Package* project was received in June from the Commonwealth Department of Health & Ageing.

September saw a record number of delegates come together for the ATCA 2008 Conference "Advancing the Therapeutic Communities Approach" in Byron Bay. This was the first time every state and territory in Australia has been represented and the New Zealand contingent also included many new faces.

One hundred and eighty TC staff members participated in the three workshops conducted by George De Leon in Sydney, Canberra & Melbourne.

In December we held our first Community Information session in Perth. Twenty eight representatives from WA Drug and Alcohol Office, Dept. of Health and Ageing, Attorney General's Dept, MercyCare, The Salvation Army, Fresh Start, WANADA, Milliya Rumurra Aboriginal Corporation, Serenity Lodge, Ngnowar Aerwah Aboriginal Corporation and Investing in Communities (WA) Inc. attended the session. Feedback was very positive and the ATCA is keen to continue this success throughout other states and territories.

Bring on 2009...

ATCA Board Update

The ATCA Board has been busy since elected at the AGM in Byron. With the support of our Executive Officer we have criss-crossed the country, initiated the national standards and training project and started planning for the continuation of the Secretariat after funding runs out in June 2009.

In October the Board invited Mitchell Giles from ADFQ to join the Board, Mitchell has now participated in two Board meetings and has already made a strong contribution to Board matters.

A vexed issue that has occupied the Board for some years now is the ATCA's membership of the World Federation of Therapeutic Communities. A number of concerns that have been raised with WFTC over the years have remained unresolved. Most recently the philosophical difference between WFTC and ATCA on the issue of harm minimisation highlighted this gap.

Consequently the ATCA Board has taken the decision to discontinue its membership of WFTC and to withdraw from its role as a Regional Federation.

Next year promises to be a busy one for the Board and the Secretariat. We plan to visit a capital city near you in our promotion of TCs and hopefully provide an opportunity for you to showcase your TC. In the meantime as the Christmas season embraces us I take this opportunity to wish you all a joyous Noel and a prosperous New Year.

Barry Evans, Chair

Secretariat Update

The National Standards and Training project is well under way with Jill Rundle, who has taken 12 months leave from WANADA to manage the project.

The literature review has been completed and Jill is in the process of organising consultation with all ATCA members, stakeholders etc. This is a very important element of the project as your input will assist in ensuring that the outcomes of the standards and training package fit well within the TC sector and enhance, not hinder, your service provision.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that the burden on AOD non-government organisations in complying with submission and reporting processes from funding bodies is becoming more time consuming and resource hungry. We are currently working with the ANCD to better understand this issue and have compiled an on-line survey. By now you should have received an email explaining the project and a link to the survey. We urge you to complete this to help us build a case to take to government.

The ATCA's next Community Information session will take place in Auckland NZ on Tuesday 24th February. Higher Ground Drug Rehabilitation Trust will co-host the event and we are looking forward to meeting our AOD colleagues in New Zealand to showcase the TC model. Invitations will be issued when arrangements have been finalised.

This is our final E-NEWS for 2008 and I would like to wish you all a very special Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

Janice Jones, EO

TC News

Ted Noffs Foundation. Blossom Buckland has recently been appointed Manager of the PALM Coffs Harbour and Michael Wicks is now the Adolescent Family Counsellor/

Assistant Manager. *Congratulations Blossom and Michael.*

Gold Coast Drug Council - Mirrikai. ICHA, the contracted accreditation reviewers in Qld for the Quality Improvement Council, have just completed a review of the National Mental Health Standards for Gold Coast Drug Council.

The feedback was that GCDC-Mirrikai has achieved accreditation with flying colours and they are being recommended for several commendations including Assessment and Care, Consumer Participation, and Partnering. All in all, they described our service as innovative and said it was an historical moment as no A&D service had gained National Accreditation in Community, A&D and mental health standards before. The staff is to be commended for their effort, as it was a time consuming process. *Congratulations to Mary and her Team, what a magnificent result.*

2009 ATCA Conference

Planning is well underway for the 2009 ATCA conference in Canberra in September 2009. The conference theme, **"TCs: Getting better all the time - Partnerships, practice & collaboration"**, focuses on evidence based practice within our programs, community partnerships and collaborative practice. The conference organising committee is pleased to announce the engagement of four keynote speakers who will provide insight into a variety of issues relevant to practice within the TC.

Dr Joel Porter, Director, Pacific Centre for Motivation & Change from New Zealand, has over 15 years of dedicated clinical experience in the addiction field and has practiced in a wide range of community and residential treatment programs in the United States, Germany and New Zealand. His research and professional interests include the systemic impacts of addictive behaviours, trauma and addiction, and the treatment of addictive behaviours.

Lauren Porter, Co-Director, Centre for Attachment in New Zealand, is a clinical social worker, consultant and psychotherapist. Her experience has focused on families struggling with issues pertaining to conflict and trauma, including child sexual abuse. Her particular focus in the conference will be on attachment and addiction, and attachment and parenting, especially highlighting the inter-generational issues evident within the TC. She will also highlight the issues for programs working with parents and children and focus on childcare needs.

Christine King is an Aboriginal woman from the Northern Territory. Her mother is a Warumungu woman from the Tennant Creek area. Her father was a Larrakia man from the Darwin area.

Christine is a social worker and head of the Indigenous social work group of the AASW with experience in the areas of Juvenile Justice, Child Protection, Youth Work, Project Management, Community Violence, Community Development, Counselling, Substance Misuse, Policy Development, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. She is the Chairperson of the National Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Workers Association,

and Indigenous Co-Chairperson of the Stolen Generations Alliance. She was heavily involved in the background work in relation to the recent Apology to the Stolen Generations. Her focus during the conference will centre on Indigenous substance use and mental health and the inherent issues in working with Aboriginal people within our TC programs.

Dr Bob Jacobs has worked in youth advocacy for over 25 years in the United States and in Australia and is a registered clinical psychologist in Queensland and a licensed attorney in the United States. Bob has recently settled in Queensland to work with the Youth Affairs Network of Queensland. He has written and spoken extensively on the issue of the overuse of psychiatric diagnoses and prescription drugs with children and young people, and is particularly interested in the way in which we work with young people with substance using behaviours within the TC model.

The conference will commence on **Monday 14 September** with visits to the ACT programs of Karralika, Canberra Recovery Service and Ted Noffs Foundation's PALM Program. This will be followed that evening by the Welcome Reception. The conference itself will get underway at the **Rydges Hotel, Capital Hill on Tuesday 15 September**, and conclude on **Thursday 17 September**. The conference will be followed by Workshops on **Friday 18 and Saturday 19 September**.

Joel Porter, Lauren Porter and Bob Jacobs will each offer a one-day workshop. A fourth workshop will be provided by the ATCA and focus on working within the TC model. This will be particularly relevant for new staff of TCs and recently established TC programs.

The conference has been timed to coincide with Floriade, providing opportunities for sightseeing during what is traditionally a beautiful time in the Nation's Capital. For this reason accommodation will also be in high demand, and we therefore urge everyone to think well in advance for bookings. Rooms have been reserved at the Rydges for the conference, and we are currently securing rooms in other hotels within Canberra. Rooms at the Rydges have been secured at 2008 off-season prices, so get in quick!

For further information, contact Lynne Magor-Blatch at magor-blatch@grapevine.com.au

Conferences & Events

**Australian Winterschool Symposium
Integration: Research, Policy & Practice**
Date: 25th - 27th May 2009. Brisbane
Contact: Dinie van den Berg 07 3834 2000

**12th E.F.T.C Conference
Rehabilitation and Drug Policy**
2nd - 5th June 2009. The Hague, The Netherlands.
www.eftc-bepartofthesolution.eu



*Wishing you joy and peace for the festive season
From all at the ATCA*