

ATCA E-NEWS

July 2008

Welcome to the first issue of the ATCA E-NEWS, a new initiative to keep you informed and up to date on what's happening within our Community.

After careful consideration of feedback from ATCA members it was agreed at the last ATCA Board meeting to do away with ATCA's quarterly newsletter and replace it with this bi-monthly E-NEWS.

Reasons for this decision were; lack of input from members, cost of printing and timely reporting of news. It is also hoped that receiving your emailed version will stimulate a response and therefore become an interactive means of communication between the ATCA Secretariat, the Board of Directors and you the members.

So we are asking that once you have read this you will email it to your staff, or better still forward us the email addresses of your staff and we will email the next issue directly to them.

We are also looking at ways to make the Members Section of the ATCA website more interactive. There is an online forum facility that has had little use. Take a look and give us your feedback on how we can make this work better for you. www.atca.com.au If you can't remember your login try: **member** and the password: **pa55word**.

SECRETARIAT UPDATE

On 30 June 2008, the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing provided funding to the ATCA to develop *National Standards for Therapeutic Communities (AOD)* in Australia. The project is seen as part of an overall development of national standards for alcohol and other drug agencies, and as such will fit within a National Framework.

The objective of this project is to ensure the integrity of the "Therapeutic Community" principle is maintained and will continue to stand as a model of best practice in the treatment of substance misuse and co-occurring disorders.

To support this contention the ATCA aims to develop a set of service standards which identify and describe good practice and will facilitate service evaluation within a quality framework.

In concert with this project the ATCA intends to produce a training package for the professional development of management and staff working within the Therapeutic Community sector. This package will also include an induction kit for staff entering the TC field.

It is envisaged that this project will:

- Provide specialist service standards which identify and describe good TC practice which can be incorporated into a national quality framework.
- Enable Therapeutic Communities to engage in service evaluation and quality improvement using methods and values that reflect the TC philosophy.
- Develop a common language which will facilitate effective relationships with all jurisdictions (federal, state and territory).
- Provide a strong network of supportive relationships.
- Promote best practice through shared learning and developing external links.
- Build workforce capacity within the AOD and comorbidity sector.
- Create an environment for sustaining the "career paths" of trained AOD workers within the NGO sector, including the valued practice of workers with "lived" experience of the field. Therapeutic communities particularly value the experience of staff who are graduates of programs, and seek to incorporate learned knowledge and experience into their professional practice.

An important aspect of the development of this project is the inclusion and participation of the ATCA membership with a view to instilling a sense of collaboration and ownership of the end product. To facilitate this a workshop will be conducted at the 2008 ATCA Conference in September.

The original three year funding contract for the ATCA Secretariat was due to expire in March 2009. In view of the time line for the abovementioned project this has now been extended till June 2009.

CONFERENCE UPDATE

Arrangements for this year's conference in Byron Bay are certainly gearing up. All the Abstracts have been received and the committee is currently in the process of reviewing these and putting together what looks to be a very exciting and diverse array of presentations.

We are very thrilled that George De Leon and Nancy Jainchill will be our guest speakers. They will share with us their knowledge and vast experiences of their involvement with the Therapeutic Community model across many sectors including, corrections, youth and co-morbidity. Of course George's main focus will be on maintaining the integrity of the Therapeutic Community model as it crosses over these sectors.

George De Leon has agreed to conduct TC workshops in Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra & Melbourne in the weeks following the conference. Details will be made available soon.

Accommodation at the Byron @ Byron is filling fast so please, if you haven't already done so, contact the resort now and don't forget to tell them it is for the ATCA Conference Group:

conferenceres@thebyronatbyron.com.au or if you would rather stay in Byron Bay you can try www.byronbayaccom.net

More information, Registration forms and applications for Site Visits are available on our website:

http://www.atca.com.au/03_conferences/Conference%20Notice3.pdf

ATCA AWARDS

Each year the ATCA Awards are presented to individuals and/or organisations that have provided dedicated and innovative leadership, thus enhancing the Therapeutic Community Model of Treatment of alcohol and other drug issues.

These Awards will be presented at the ATCA Annual Conference dinner on 10th September 2008. Nominations are now invited and the closing date is Friday 1st August 2008.

Full details can be downloaded from:

<http://www.atca.com.au/home.htm>

TC NEWS

This year Karen Bartlett of Fresh Hope won the 2008 Queenslander of the Year Suncorp Community Spirit Award.

On presenting the award Premier Anna Bligh said "Karen Bartlett is another amazing Queenslander making a significant contribution to improving the lives of mothers and their children suffering the consequences of substance abuse. Karen founded the rehabilitation centre Fresh Hope with the aim of creating a live-in family oriented rehabilitation centre that allows mothers and their children to live together during rehabilitation."

Our very sincere congratulations go to Karen for the wonderful work she does at Fresh Hope and her tireless and always smiling team; John, Mary and all the other volunteers who give their time to this small but effective Therapeutic Community. Well done.

ATCA welcomes two new Provisional Members to the Association:

- Wesley Rehabilitation Centre, NSW and
- Drug and Alcohol Services Association, Alice Springs (DASA)

ATCA BOARD UPDATE

By now you will have received the call for nominations for this year's election to the ATCA Board of Directors. In line with the new Constitution ratified at last year's AGM the board will now consist of seven elected Directors and two Directors nominated by the Board. This year Stuart Anderson, Mary Alcorn, Barry Evans, Carol Daws and Antigone Quince will be standing down leaving Garth Popple, Gerard Byrne, Eric Allan and Lynne Magor-Blatch continuing their Directorship.

Therefore at the 2008 election three positions will need to be filled.

Remember the closing date for nominations is 5pm Tuesday 5th August 2008.

The next ATCA Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday 14th August. If you would like to bring anything to the attention of the Board at this meeting you can email:

atca@atca.com.au