



# The Abbeyfield Observer

A regular newsletter from  
Abbeyfield Australia

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Abbeyfield Australia, PO Box 1293, Collingwood, Vic. 3066. [www.abbeyfield.org.au](http://www.abbeyfield.org.au)  
Tel: (03) 9419 8222 fax: (03) 9419 8575 email: [admin@abbeyfield.org.au](mailto:admin@abbeyfield.org.au)

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## From the chairman's desk: Gay Gardner AM

Dear Abbeyfield Members and friends,

Recently my husband and I had the great privilege of being made welcome at the Babinda Abbeyfield House in North Queensland.

Situated an hour's drive from Cairns, Babinda Abbeyfield House is a beautiful and unique house that is magnificently spacious and airy. Set in large grounds, it faces the tallest mountain in Queensland; and the tropical bushland nearby is beautiful. It is constructed to withstand cyclones and flooding that occur in the area, and it is a wonderful example of a house that has been adapted to local conditions whilst retaining the culture and characteristics of an Abbeyfield House.



The Local Society is to be congratulated on such a wonderful House.

Gay Gardner AM,

Abbeyfield Australia Chairman

Pictured right –

The chairman of Abbeyfield Australia, Gay Gardner AM, Abbeyfield Australia Director, Wanda Edmonds, and Richard Gardner at Babinda Abbeyfield House.



### **Vale Colin Haines, JP OAM**

It is with great sadness that we record the death of our Senior Vice Chairman, Mr Colin Haines JP OAM in August this year.

Colin died peacefully in his sleep following one of his many evening meetings. Colin was formerly the mayor of Marion Council and was the chairman of the Abbeyfield Society Marion (SA) for a number of years. He served as a director on the Board of Abbeyfield Australia, and made a significant contribution to the work of the Board, bringing a depth of knowledge and wisdom to the table.

### **News from the AGM of Abbeyfield Australia**

The AGM of Abbeyfield Australia Ltd was held in Melbourne on November 21<sup>st</sup>.

As a result of the nominations received for Board positions, the Board welcomed two new directors - Mr Francis Duffy is a senior social worker specialising in aged care; and Mr John Lawrence is an educator and aged care consultant. The members who were re-elected were Mrs Gay Gardner and Mr David Kay. Mr Peter Reed did not seek re-election and there was a vacancy caused by the death of Mr Colin Haines JP OAM.

After ongoing consultation with members following the 2008 AGM, and with some subsequent minor amendments, the new constitution of Abbeyfield Australia, presented and was passed at the AGM.

### **Review of Abbeyfield Australia affiliation levy (September 2009)**

In September 2009, all Abbeyfield local societies were sent a questionnaire pertaining to the affiliation levy which is currently paid by all houses and hostels.

#### **Reliance upon affiliation levies**

Abbeyfield Australia Limited relies on affiliation levies from affiliated local societies for its existence. Without levies, Abbeyfield Australia would not be financially viable. The Abbeyfield Australia Board acknowledges that a priority is to gain government, corporate or benevolent funding to secure its financial viability. However, until such time as additional funding can be accessed, Abbeyfield Australia remains largely dependent on the affiliation levies from the local societies.

#### **Survey response rate**

Eighteen local societies (responsible for 19 houses) responded to the questionnaire with several responses containing constructive comments and suggestions.

A report of the survey will be published in the next Observer.

## The Canberra Abbeyfield Houses

Canberra has three Abbeyfield houses, two of which are 'traditional' Abbeyfield houses, accommodating elderly residents and the third for younger people with mild intellectual disability.

### The 'Traditional' Houses

The first house opened in 1989 in the Canberra suburb of Ainslie. This house was designed and built by ACT Housing with a substantial donation from the Bond Corporation. The house is beautifully situated, being close to shops, an attractive park and a bus stop.



In 1998, a second house was opened in the suburb of Garran. This house too was built by ACT Housing and is likewise in a very convenient location.

Since the ACT Government provided the funding for both houses, people who qualify for government housing must always be given priority.

Our committee is the only local society in Australia which manages two houses.

Several people on the Committee which manages Ainslie and Garran worked in the aged care sector prior to retirement. A number worked on

the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT). Other Committee members have many and varied talents.

A significant strength of our Committee is the willingness of everyone to participate in practical tasks when needed. For example, the former gerontology nurse specialist for the ACT might one day be liaising with hospital staff about discharge plans for a resident and the next day be cooking dinner at one of the houses if the housekeeper is suddenly taken ill.

We have a large Committee and have found right from the beginning that the most suitable way to attract new members is through personal contacts.

It was very appropriate on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Ainslie house to have the birthday cake cut by Peter Grills who was Commissioner for Housing at the time that the Ainslie house received the initial grant. Peter is also the husband of our dynamic Chairperson, Maggie Grills and both of them give wonderful service to Abbeyfield in many ways.

Another husband and wife team who work untiringly on the committee are Dale and Penny Hebbard, our joint treasurers. Their contribution enables us to be in a strong financial position at all times which means that there are always funds for necessary maintenance or updating of existing fixtures in the houses.

Our very skilled Applications Convenor, Ann Hazlewood, has over many years been a great support to other Committee members and was the author of Fresh Fields, the history of Abbeyfield in Canberra.



Despite the departure of a number of residents to hostel care, we have managed to fill vacancies fairly quickly. One of the main reasons for this is the number of elderly people from interstate who have moved to Canberra to be close to their relatives. Moving into an Abbeyfield house offers an excellent option for them.

We do our best to maintain contact with community workers, hospital and ACAT staff but, like everywhere, staff changes occur quite often.

### **Curtin House**

The third Abbeyfield house in Canberra was opened in late 2006, again having been built at the expense of the ACT government.

The Disability House has a separate committee although a former Chairperson of the Ainslie/Garran Committee is a member of both Committees.

This exciting new concept is a house for younger people with mild intellectual disabilities and will, hopefully be the forerunner of many more such houses.

The Committee of the Curtin house is separate from the other Abbeyfield committee, although a former Chairperson of the Ainslie/Garran Committee is a member of both Committees. Like the other ACT Committee, it has a number of people who have worked in the relevant area, in this case in the field of intellectual disability. These include the former Principal of a special school, a social worker, a community nurse, a retired TAFE teacher as well as a number of parents of the residents.

We are grateful to the ACT Government for making these houses possible and are hopeful that other Government bodies will be forthcoming with funding to enable more houses to be built for younger people with disability who want to remain independent but need the extra support that an Abbeyfield house can provide.

Alison Hancock  
Director, Abbeyfield Australia

### **Advice to Treasurers of Local Societies**

It has been brought to the attention of the Board of Abbeyfield Australia that, in some States, the relevant Incorporation Act, or the regulations, may allow for organisations to undertake an accounting review or to be excluded from the need for auditing at any level.

The Board has sought advice from the auditors of Abbeyfield Australia and from our insurance company, and has resolved to include the following clause in the Blue Book under Audit – “it is recommended that all Societies’ financial reports be subject to an annual audit by a registered auditor”.

### **From the Editor: Jill Parker - What’s happening at your House?**

I am pleased that the first edition of the Abbeyfield Observer was so well received.

The more reports and information that I receive, the better I am able to let you know what is happening within our organisation. So, please, feel free to overload me with your stories and photos.

Regards,

Jill Parker, Hon Editor.

*Merry Christmas  
and a  
Happy New Year*