



A regular newsletter from
Abbeyfield Australia

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The Abbeyfield Observer

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From the chairman's desk: Gay Gardner AM

Abbeyfield Abroad

Abbeyfield Australia has been part of Abbeyfield International (AI), a body comprising all the Abbeyfield Societies established in sixteen countries around the world viz Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jersey, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States of America, and associate member Mexico.

With its headquarters in St Albans, Hertfordshire, England, AI has co-ordinated conferences of its member countries on a regular basis – the last one of which was held in Toronto Canada in October 2008. Jill (Director of Abbeyfield Australia) and Doug Parker, and our CEO Chris Reside attended this last conference. Matters common to all Societies are discussed and most useful interchanges are made between member countries at these conferences.

As can be imagined the Abbeyfield concept has in each of these countries been varied to meet the needs of local conditions, but the basic concept has remained the same. It is a proud achievement that Abbeyfield has met and continues to meet the housing needs of men and women of so many diverse backgrounds and cultures in so many countries.

Due to its limited financial resources the Board of AI resolved at its most recent Annual General Meeting that it would merge with The Abbeyfield Society (TAS). This peak body has responsibility for 700 Abbeyfield Houses and Hostels throughout the United Kingdom through the respective local Societies. With appropriate safeguards for preserving the unique nature of Abbeyfield International, it will have a more secure financial base without, I believe, losing its identity.

As a director and representative of Australia on the AI Board I believe it is extremely important the needs and aspirations of the member countries of Abbeyfield are respected and I believe this will occur with the appropriate representation on The Abbeyfield Society Board. Australia is proud to be a member of this large Abbeyfield family, making its unique contribution to it.

Over and above everything else Abbeyfield is achieving its objective by providing a home for each of our residents in the various countries of the world so that they may enjoy the company of fellow residents in a safe, healthy and happy environment.

Gay Gardner AM, Abbeyfield Australia Chairman

Abbeyfield International News

As noted by our Chairman above, at the meeting of the Board of Directors and AGM of Abbeyfield International, AI passed the resolution to merge with The Abbeyfield Society in the UK (TAS). The merger is planned for October 2010, subject to certain approvals. Moira Bacon (from Canada) is the new Chair of the Abbeyfield International Board. She takes over from Allan Snowie.

Moira has been involved in the creation of affordable housing for seniors since 1983. She has served on the Canadian National Board of Abbeyfield since 2002.

Moira will work to ensure that the merger between Abbeyfield International and TAS proceeds successfully. She intends to keep Abbeyfield's value base and philosophy – the welfare of lonely older people – up front in her work. She states that, "While as partners we may face different problems, we share commitment and vision, and I believe that this merger provides an opportunity that will result in a stronger, progressive Global Abbeyfield".

Happenings at Abbeyfield Mortlake.

Abbeyfield Mortlake is one of three hostels within the Abbeyfield Australia family.

Opened in 1990 as a 15 resident extended care House, it was extended to accommodate 30 residents in 2002. In March this year it experienced three major celebrations.

On Friday March 12th residents were honoured by a visit from the Governor of Victoria, Prof. David de Kresta, and his wife Jan (and Guide Dog ambassador Astro). The Governor toured the House, looked through the new extension, and then spent ½ hour meeting and chatting with the residents.



Left to right: James Purcell (Mayor of Moyne Shire), Mrs de Kresta, Prof David de Kresta (Governor of Victoria) Eve Cumming (Chairman, Abbeyfield Mortlake) Doug Parker (CEO, Abbeyfield Mortlake) and Brett Stonestreet (CEO Moyne Shire)



The Governor chats with some of the residents.

On 19th March Abbeyfield Mortlake celebrated the 20th anniversary of the arrival of its first resident (Mrs Emily Jubb). To celebrate this illustrious event, past committee members and staff were invited to join the current team for an afternoon of reminiscences followed by a celebratory dinner.



On Tuesday March 23rd a new wing for 9 residents was officially opened by the current Chairman Eve Cumming, in the presence of the member for Wannan, the Hon. David Hawker, and the Mayor of Moyne Shire, Cr James Purcell, and 100 invited guests, sponsors, and residents and staff. Ms Cumming noted that the House "is a wonderful friendly environment and a home that everyone can be proud of". And David Hawker – who has seen the House grow from its humble beginnings - said that Abbeyfield Mortlake is a wonderful organisation which ranks highly amongst the elite of aged care houses.

St Josephs Abbeyfield Malvern officially reopens

St Josephs Abbeyfield Malvern was officially reopened on Sunday 21 March 2010 in a simple ceremony led by St Josephs Abbeyfield Malvern chairman John Borland. Chris Reside (CEO, Abbeyfield Australia) also addressed the gathering of residents, committee members and guests, and the house was blessed by St Josephs Parish Priest, Fr Greg Brett.



'St Joeys' was razed by fire on the morning of Monday 16 February 2009. The house suffered extensive damage though thankfully there was no loss of life.

The reconstructed house is beautifully finished and very comfortable having been reconstructed with minor improvements and tastefully redecorated by Liz Olszewki (St Josephs committee member). Residents commenced returning to the house in December 2009. The majority of previous residents have returned to 'their' house.

Above: After the Fire, Feb 2009

In speaking at the reopening Mr Reside commended the St Josephs Abbeyfield Malvern committee of management. "Abbeyfield Australia is a small organisation made strong by the commitment and talent of its volunteers in 26 communities across Australia. Our people are Abbeyfield's greatest asset as they give of themselves to provide high quality community housing within their local community – the St Joeys committee of management clearly exemplifies this commitment."



Christmas 2009 - Julie King, John Lawrence, Joy Beer celebrate in the refurbished House.

Abbeyfield Australia Website:

Abbeyfield Australia launched its new web site (www.abbeyfield.org.au) during February 2010 and the feedback to date has been terrific!

Welfare agencies have been particularly positive because the web site allows social workers and housing officers to see at a glance where vacancies are and to directly contact the relevant local society by phone or email. The new site includes plain English information about the Abbeyfield model and lists vacancy and contact details for every individual house and hostel.

To get the most benefit from the Abbeyfield Australia web site, all local societies are encouraged to:

- appoint a committee member or volunteer to regularly update the information published on the site regarding your local society
- make 'Abbeyfield Australia web site info' a standing item on every monthly meeting agenda. (This will ensure the vacancy and general information published is always current)
- promote the Abbeyfield Australia web site in all marketing and advertising
- send a link to the Abbeyfield Australia web site to your local and regional councils and social welfare agencies, asking that they include the web site on their 'links' page.

If you have not already done so, please have a look at the website, and make any comments that you have via the 'Contact us' tab on the website. We would love to hear from you too!

Abbeyfield Australia logo

Complementing the launch of the new web site is the roll-out of a customised Abbeyfield Australia logo for every house and hostel. The customized logos are based on the Abbeyfield Australia logo (which itself is based on the Abbeyfield International logo). Local societies should use the logo on all material including minutes, agendas, pay slips, correspondence and marketing material.

Abbeyfield Australia becomes a registered Housing Provider in NSW



Abbeyfield Australia is proud to have been formally registered as a Community Housing Provider by the NSW Registrar of Community Housing. The Registration reflects the value of the Abbeyfield model and our commitment to comply with the NSW Housing Act and Regulations

Abbeyfield Australia housekeeper conference 2010

The 2010 housekeeper conference will be held on Thursday 27 May and Friday 28 May 2010 at the Metropolitan Community Church, Burnley Street Richmond.

The conference is a key aspect of Abbeyfield Australia's commitment to the ongoing professional development of our housekeepers.

The 2010 conference will again cover issues specifically targeted to housekeepers.

As a reminder, feedback on the 2009 conference included:

- "good to be kept on topic"
- "liked factual info sessions"
- "very informative and enjoyable couple of days"
- "I think we all learnt a lot"
- "a lot of material covered in 2 days"

Just some of the issues and outcomes of the 2009 conference included

- 1 Auditing of food standards in Victoria
- 2 Ability for housekeepers to job swap
- 3 Housekeeper safety
- 4 Emergency housekeeper bank
- 5 Insurance for personal belongings (HK and residents)
- 6 Housekeeper position title
- 7 Inducting new residents thoroughly into an Abbeyfield house.
- 8 Clarify who cleans a room when a resident leaves (spring clean).
Should this expense come out of residents bond?
- 9 'Webster packs' for prescription medication
- 10 Key safes at some Abbeyfield Houses

Affiliation levy review

As reported in detail in the December 2009 *Abbeyfield Observer*, the Abbeyfield Australia board had conducted a survey of all local societies as to their views on the Abbeyfield Australia affiliation levy. The Board considered a final report on the review at its meeting on Saturday 13 February 2010, at which time the Board determined to maintain the status quo – applying an even five per cent levy upon Abbeyfield Houses and a 1.25 per cent levy upon Abbeyfield Hostels.

In reaching the decision the Board was conscious of the strong support (shown in the survey) for the current levy regime. A proposal to adopt a user pays model was also discussed, as was placing a cap on the maximum levy payable, however these options were not adopted by the Board.

From the Editor:

I hope that you have enjoyed this edition of the newsletter.

The next edition will feature a brief history of the **Richmond (Victoria) Abbeyfield House**. If you have something to share about your House or people, please forward it to Abbeyfield Australia.

Regards,

Jill Parker, Hon Editor.