



The Compassionate Friends

Australian National Newsletter

No. 41 November 2006 Vol 12 Issue 3

In this issue:

Editorial

Interstate News:

ACT and Queanbeyan

New South Wales

Queensland

Victoria

Western Australia

TCF Australian National Directory

TCF Australian Heritage Site Directory

From the Editors

Cheery greetings from Chris and Maxine

This newsletter has turned out to be Australian content only. To all our international friends, we look forward to your making contact again next time.

As usual, all reports give a picture of great activity. It is good to read of an emphasis on taking care of ourselves as well as supporting others. Publicity and fund raising are always at the fore-front of our minds (and how comforting to know that no matter how sophisticated we may have become, there is still a place in the fund-raising repertoire for a stall selling cakes and chutney!)

It is interesting to note that many of us have held AGMs in the past two or three months and now have new committees in place. The work of committees is a fundamental part of our organisation and provides the means by which we are able to provide support to our chapters and group leaders. The often difficult tasks of publicity and fundraising mentioned above plus organising training, providing support to bereaved parents and siblings, liaison with community organisations and attending to administration matters take a great deal of effort and are particularly demanding for bereaved parents to perform.

We note with interest sub-committee work in Perth to review their constitution and policy and procedures. It would be interesting to share the outcomes of this work with others. This type of work often goes unnoticed and unheralded but without the dedication and enterprise of our committee members our organisation would not be able to function.

Please take some time to review the Heritage Site Directory and where you know of sites that are not included or where the current details are incomplete send us an update of these sites.

Something that is missing on the Australian news front this time is any mention of a national body. Work has been temporarily halted and it is likely that it will be reactivated next year if we can muster enough interest amongst all of the states. We hope to bring you more on this matter in our next newsletter.

Finally, we would welcome any comment from any of our readers on what you think of the newsletter. We believe that the format handed over by Eva is a very good one and have largely stuck with her format. We have developed conventions with formatting, dates and spelling to provide consistency and ease the burden of editing and this has been largely followed. Apart from our major contributors we get very little feedback on the newsletter; do you find it useful and what would you like us to concentrate on.

Until next time, have a peaceful Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

Yours in compassionate friendship.

Chris and Maxine

Interstate News



ACT and Queanbeyan

Firstly, our AGM. Because our first gathering to re-start TCF in Canberra in 1991 was in September we make our AGM in that month each year. Latterly we have added a simple memorial ceremony and afternoon tea to make the most of a get-together of members and it is usually a well attended gathering. This year however, for various reasons, only six members were present – luckily this made a quorum and we were able to proceed. By the end of the afternoon a committee was elected – and by the end of the week two other members were co-opted so that full numbers were achieved. Looking at the names we realise that for the first time we have had a complete turn-around; there are no names from the original 1991 committee, although several of us are still very much involved in other roles. Our new office bearers are as follows:

Co-ordinator	David Crockett
Secretary	Jillian Crockett
Treasurer	Pam Tarrant
Committee Members:	Sue Short, Jane Wingfield, Chris Wronski, and Diana van der Voort.

Something new for us this year was the holding of a retreat at a convent /conference centre in the Southern Highlands; 17 members including five couples spent the weekend together. There is a full account of it from one of the participants in our local newsletter; suffice it to say here that the weekend was one of friendship, support, peace, rest and fun. We have made a return booking for April next year.

Another new event was holding a TCF information stall at a community day in one of our suburbs.

During the year there have been quite a number of opportunities for members to join seminars, workshops and hear lectures in the areas of grief, bereavement support and self care arranged by various community groups. We were especially grateful to be able to participate in the

Bereavement Journey Workshop arranged by SIDSandKids. We look forward to more such co-operative ventures.

Activities coming up for us in the near future include: our usual end-of-year breakfast at the Hotel Kurrajong; the last sharing meeting of the year where we have special Christmas activities; meeting at our memorial seat in Weston Park from 7:00-8:00 pm on 10 December to join in Worldwide Candle Lighting; and back to the seat on 28 January for a shared breakfast on International Children's Memorial Day.

Very best wishes to all for a safe and restful holiday season

Yours in compassionate friendship
Chris and Maxine
TCF ACT and Queanbeyan



New South Wales

Once again we are delighted to report on the ongoing progress that has been made during the past quarter. TCF NSW continues to be challenged to grow and develop ever-expanding resources to meet the needs of all the bereaved families who look to us for support.

We are actively planning a Chapter Leaders Retreat in March 2007, which will offer an opportunity for training and support for our most valuable resource: our front line volunteers who give so generously of their time and compassion. The carers who work at the Bereaved Parent Centre and the council members will also be included since they are equally as important, filling in the gaps whenever local chapters are not available and pointing bereaved parents to the appropriate chapters whenever possible. The Petrea King Quest for Life Centre in Bundanoon has been tentatively booked as the venue for this event. Petrea King invited TCF to send three members to their bereavement program in October. A NSW member from the Miranda Chapter and two members of TCF in the ACT attended that program. A very favourable report on that experience has been submitted.

In September we had a most successful residential weekend at Rafferty's Resort at Lake Macquarie. We had over 50 TCF members in attendance from throughout the state as well as from the ACT. Julie Dunsmore, the President of the National Association for Loss and Grief NSW Inc., was the facilitator and provided the expertise and compassionate program we knew we could expect from her. A highlight of the weekend was the very moving tribute to our children provided in the Ecumenical Service of Remembrance conducted by Julie Simpson, RSJ, and Jennie Meyer. Julie works with bereaved families through the program Seasons for Growth, and Jennie works in pastoral care. We appreciated not only the beautiful service they conducted but also their work with the siblings who attended the weekend.

Another highlight of the weekend was a special craft session led by Sue Berry, who regularly leads a craft group at the Bereaved Parent Centre. This, along with the wonderful Saturday evening dinner and silent auction, offered a chance for members to get to know one another and enjoy just being together.

During the weekend we also held our AGM and elected two new council members; Tony Fisher and Daphne Roper. These new members replace retiring members Evelyn Hague and Marley Brown. They will join President Mary Carroll and returning members Pam Fisher, Janis McKenzie, and Stephen Hotop in leading TCF NSW in 2007.

Robyn Murchie, a long-time volunteer carer at the Centre and member of the FOCUS editorial team, died in August 2006 and is very sadly missed. Her warm and caring nature and her tireless work on behalf of the Survivors of Suicide group will always be remembered.

Evelyn Hague has decided that the time has come to retire as editor and publisher of FOCUS at the end of this year. She is loved by all of us and her tireless work for so many years has made FOCUS a

respected publication in TCF worldwide; her care and concern for TCF and all its members have made her name synonymous with compassion.

The holiday season approaches and is always a difficult time for bereaved families, but we will make every effort to make this a special time of togetherness in remembrance of our children. Various chapters will hold candle lighting services and a special luncheon for all the volunteers at the Bereaved Parent Centre will be held on 4 December at the Centre. At that time and in all the various holiday activities throughout the state, we will be remembering our friends Australia-wide and sending you our best wishes for the New Year to be filled with comfort and hope.

Judy Tuggle
TCF NSW



Queensland

As always, we have been very busy here at the Drop-In-Centre since our submission in July.

Our wonderful volunteers who contribute so much of their time to TCF Qld have been busy doing many tasks around the office and manning stalls etc at various functions during the last three months. On 7 August we held another fundraising event with Charmaine Wilson "Spirit Whispers" who is a psychic and a bereaved parent herself. Charmaine does these shows for TCF and donates all the proceeds to TCF Qld. for which we are very grateful.

Our stand at Loss and Grief Awareness Week in the city in August was cancelled due to rain, which was a shame because this is a good event for us to promote awareness of TCF. I did manage to do some networking with a couple of organisations over coffee which was very beneficial.

Our AGM was held on the 12 September and all positions were declared vacant. Our AGM normally takes the form of a support meeting, where all members are invited to

attend. Our president reads her report of events that have taken place during the year and then the election process begins and afterwards members are invited to supper. We have on occasions in the past had a guest speaker attend and this can draw more members to an AGM. Our new committee members for 2006/2007 elected on the night are:

President	Bev Bosma
Vice President	Lorraine Edgley
Secretary	Lyn Macklin
Treasurer	Debbie Freeman
Committee Members:	Graham Macklin, Karen Gerry, Vera Caltabiano, John Van Raalte, Helen Alcock
Co-ordinator	Joy Van Raalte

As you can see, most of our previous committee members were re-elected and two new ones elected. Our sincere thanks go to these people for their willingness to give of themselves to guide our organisation during the next 12 months.

Another fundraiser that we held in September was at the Lions of Logan Spring Festival (all the Lions Clubs in Logan City), where we had a stall with crafts, jams, relishes etc. We had a reasonable day with much needed funds being raised (every dollar counts).

Some of our Townsville Chapter members travelled to Mackay in October to help facilitate the commencement of a support group in the area. It went extremely well with approximately 50 people attending and in the words of Ruth (from Townsville) who facilitated this meeting "What an overwhelming response; the meeting room was filled to capacity and more. Here we met on level ground and we listened as stories of these unspeakable tragedies unfolded. Tears flowed and emotions unravelled. Heads nodded in agreement as, one by one, parents and siblings spoke of the agony and the judgements by those who could not know the pain yet always seemed eager to move the parent/sibling through to a quick resolution of the situation. There is no resolution - more an acceptance of the circumstance and it is arrogant of others to suggest they have any idea as to the way in

which our rituals should or should not be performed in order to get to the next minute, the next hour, let alone another day". We now have an active support group set up in Mackay with Ann facilitating and Kerry helping her, meetings will be held the last Thursday of every month beginning 30 November 2006. We gratefully thank Ann and Kerry for taking on this very much needed role.

We continue to have third year medical students attend our drop-in-centre as part of their attachment programme and they welcome the opportunity to learn and understand more about grief and bereavement. As I write this article today we have just had our Melbourne Cup lunch in our meeting room, where we had champagne, chicken, salad and a smorgasbord of other delightful foods. Then, after the race had been and gone with the lucky ones in the sweep receiving their winnings, we had afternoon tea with Toblerone cheesecake, caramel tarts, Lindor chocolates and the list goes on. The champagne might explain why I am waffling on!!!

We have another stall being held on the 17 November 2006 through the Sherwood Community Festival to raise funds and our Christmas Hamper raffle donations have been coming in quite well. A tip for other chapters for donations - you can write to your local councillor requesting a donation from their discretionary fund to support your event. I don't know if this is the same for Australia wide but my local councillor donated for our Christmas Hamper raffle. Have a go, there is no harm in trying.

Our Christmas Candlelight Service is the next event on the 10 December and we are busy getting everything together for this beautiful night of remembering our children at this time of year. We will also be lighting the international candle at 7pm with the rest of the world. Then we reach January 2007 and we will celebrate International Children's Memorial Day on Sunday the 28 January 2007 in New Farm Park followed by a picnic.

From all of us here at TCF Qld we wish you peace, joy and hope for the festive season and look forward to reading the national newsletter in the new year.

Joy
Co-ordinator
On behalf of the TCF Queensland
Committee



South Australia

Our regular South Australian contributor is on holidays and as a consequence there is no article from TCF SA.



Victoria

TCF Victoria held the Annual General Meeting on 26 September; I am delighted to say that Mariette Buckle has now been appointed to the Board of Management. It is wonderful to have her on board and know she will bring great value to TCF Victoria. At the same time, we are sad to say that three long serving Board members have decided not to re-stand. Doreen Kellar, Lyn Bennet and Barb Summers after much deliberation feel it is time to move on. Doreen has been involved with TCF since 1993 and Lyn since 1995; Barb was TCF President from 2000 to 2005 and has been on the board since 1997. Each one of these people has contributed greatly to TCF and their passion and support of other bereaved parents has been beyond reproach. On behalf of all at TCF Victoria, we extend our heartfelt thanks to each of them.

In its 24th year, TCF Victoria was invited by NALAG to participate in their most recent Community Forum on Workplace Grief where there were a number of employers and community organisations represented. Laraine Rasmussen was on the panel and Anne Wicking spoke on the 2007 Compassionate Employer Recognition Awards.

The 2006 Volunteer Group Leader Training has just concluded. As a result we have new Support Group Leaders trained for several groups and a new group in Traralgon will be commencing shortly. For

the first time, we invited volunteers running bereavement support groups for the Motor Neurone Disease Association to participate. The feedback from all participants was that it was extremely successful and joining together was effective. I am also pleased to say that a new social group will commence in Morwell in November.

One of our volunteers has been working on a project with TCF members to support the dissemination of information about TCF within their local communities, including GPs, Community Centres, and Neighbourhood Houses. The members will visit these places and ask that information be displayed about TCF. They will also go back from time to time to ensure that there are enough stock displayed. We feel this is a great way for the general community to be aware that TCF is here to support bereaved parents and siblings.

The Lake Attack has become a regular feature on the Defence Calendar and is one of the primary vehicles in which Defence raises funds for community charities. TCF Victoria is humbled and grateful to be one of four supported charities in 2006.

Three major events are hosted by the Joint Logistics Group, commanded by Air Vice Marshal (AVM) Christopher Spence, AO, located at Victoria Barracks. The management and coordination is the responsibility of a dedicated team of 17 Defence personnel, headed by Colonel Lindsay Morton.

The three events kicked off with the Foster's Grand Prix lunch on 28 March with over 250 guests, the buffet lunch and entertainment was a great success. DHL, the principal sponsor for 2006 presented the sponsorship cheque of \$32000.

Lake Attack 2006 was held on Sunday 27 August at Albert Park Lake. This run/walk event drew interest from across the community. The day was full of highlights, including Mayor John So and Minister Justin Madden who started the race in fine style. The energetic participation of a record number of 1516 entrants, were all vying for the winner's podium, the main feature of the day.

The culmination of the events was the formal dinner and charity auction held at Victoria Barracks on 16 September. Host AVM Spence, AO; welcomed guests to the Officer's Mess for a night of fine dining, wining and entertainment. The guest speaker Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie, AO, DSC, CSM, is the Vice Chief of the Defence Force. He gave an inspiring speech on where all our troops are currently deployed from East to West of our continent.

TCF President, John Hurley was presented with a cheque for \$37,500 by AVM Spence. In total these events raised \$150,000 this result amazed us all and not least the four charities who are privileged to receive this money.

In friendship,

John Hurley
President
TCF Victoria



Western Australia

Perth

Our current committee was elected at the AGM in August. Unfortunately our president has recently had to retire due to ill health so we will be looking to fill this position shortly.

Our AGM format is very simple with the bare minimum of formalities – the retiring of the old committee and the election of the new one and the handing over of paperwork and other material. This is usually followed by the new committee holding a getting-to-know you meeting fairly soon after the AGM. Then we hold monthly meetings of the committee.

We are very fortunate to have a sub-committee to handle the review of the constitution which is now ready to place before the members early next year. Our policies and procedures are also under review. We also have a sub-committee to help with fund raising; a vital part of the organisation as we still do not get any government funding.

Currently we have a quiz night organised for 11 November, expecting to get in the

region of 20 tables, with eight to a table.

In December we have our Annual Children's Christmas Memorial Service in St George's Cathedral, Perth, which was full last year, and includes the lighting of candles in memory of our children.

In January we hold International Children's Memorial Day in Kings Park, Perth at 5:30 pm, with a short speech by our patron Graham Mabury, followed by music, and the release of balloons rising high into the sky over the Swan River in memory of our children, and finally a picnic for all bereaved parents on the lush grass.

In January we will also be meeting our patron again to have morning coffee and outline our program for the year ahead.

Christine Flux
Secretary
TCF Western Australia Inc

Mandurah

Our AGM in September was well attended and we're pleased to welcome the new committee as follows:

President	Margot McAllister
Vice President	Phil Richardson
Secretary	Tina Pearce
Treasurer	Pat Connett
Committee members:	Emily Pinnell, Rosemary Rana, Barbara Jackson and Russell Monk.

One statistic worth mentioning is that our contacts with members of bereaved families have increased by 43.4% over the past three years. Wow! Yet there's still so much to do! All we need is several more volunteers and of course the funds to continue our work. Our volunteers continue to fundraise with one day raffles and we've been successful recently with two funding applications.

The City of Mandurah and the Peel Development Commission provided joint funding which enabled us to pay for the design and printing of a Promotional Package. Our package consists of a folder which has a blue butterfly die cut, an insert with a description of our history and services and a business card which again

has the lovely butterfly. The Launch of the package was held on Friday 6 October and attended by representatives of many local community groups including police, education and health agencies. We are now in the process of distributing the package which can, of course, also be used for families.

We were granted funds from PEACH of ALCOA to take 20 bereaved parents to a weekend retreat at the lovely Nanga Bush Camp in Dwellingup in November. A similar retreat was held two years ago and was one of the best events we had ever held for bereaved parents.

Planning is also underway for our Candlelight Service to be held on Sunday 3 December, at 7:00 pm at Christ's Church, corner Sholl Street & Pinjarra Road, Mandurah. When we met recently with the new minister of that church it was touching to see how impressed she was with the proposed format and content of our service. This was her first contact with The Compassionate Friends and won't be the last.

Once again I'll be going up to M.C. the balloon release on 17 December, which is organised by my daughter Lorraine (the TCF Kambalda contact) at the Memorial Gardens in Kambalda, in the Goldfields area. This lovely event was attended by 85 people last year.

Our centre will be closed from 18 December and will reopen on 8 January, with Tina and I taking the calls redirected to us.

Then we'll be busy organising the International Children's Memorial Services to be held on the last Sunday in January in Mandurah and in Palm Beach.

We will be holding our next Walk to Remember on Sunday 18 March 2007. This year's inaugural walk provided us with loads of publicity and was the most successful fundraiser we've had so far. We adopted the procedure used in the USA and were overwhelmed with the positive response from our members and the community.

It was lovely to have a brief visit from Maxine during her holiday here in the west. We welcome any member from eastern state chapters to arrange a visit if the opportunity arises. It's always nice to put a face to the name.

Our chapter is the Australian distributor of Michael Whitman's collection of memorial songs and music entitled "Before Their Time". We have volumes one and two available in cassette tapes and CDs plus volume three which is a four CD set. We use these at our events. Please contact us if you wish to make any purchases for your chapter.

Margot McAllister
President TCF Mandurah

TCF AUSTRALIAN DIRECTORY

TCF AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

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Hosted on TCF NSW website

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After hours: (08) 9582 8113

International direct dialling prefix: 61 8

**For International dialling use the IDD prefix
plus the last 8 digits**

Please notify directory amendments/additions to newsletter editor

Updated: 20:59 15 November 2006

TCF AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE SITE REGISTER

TCF Chapter: TCF ACT and Queanbeyan

City/Town: Canberra

State: ACT

Description of site:

Children's memorial seat in Weston Park overlooking Lake Burley Griffin within a stand of eucalypts and near a BBQ area.

Significance of site:

Seat was erected by ACT Government and has a memorial plaque dedicated to our children. We use the site for TCF ceremonies and gatherings and also for private reflection.

Location of site: Weston Park Yarralumla

Map reference: UBD map 58 J9

Access to site – hours: 24 hour access

Local chapter contact: Maxine (02) 6286 6134

Other information: Weston Park is open to the public; full details of the site are available at: <http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org.au/ACT.htm>

TCF Chapter: Miranda

City/Town: Gymea

State: NSW

Description of Site:

A memorial garden and park bench in the grounds of Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Art Centre. The garden has eleven Compassionate Roses (planted in the eleventh year of the Miranda Chapter). The roses are planted in a round bed with a small hedge border.

Sutherland Council donated a memorial plaque which is mounted on a sizeable rock and placed in the garden. Placed near the rose garden we have a 'Cotswold' park bench with a similar plaque. This bench was donated to Hazelhurst through the Miranda Chapter by the Waratah Social Group. The memorial plaque is dedicated to the memory of the children of the Miranda Chapter and contains the TCF logo and a tribute to the children. Hazelhurst comes under the control of the Sutherland Shire Council, whose landscapers take care of the gardens.

Significance of Site:

The site is used by TCF members as a meeting place for coffee and lunch and as a quiet place for the chapter leader to meet with newly bereaved parents.

Location of Site: Hazelhurst Gallery and Regional Arts Centre, 782 Kingsway, Gymea.

Map Reference: Enter on Kingsway, Gymea, between Talara Road and Holtham Road.

Access to site: Open 7 days a week from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. except Christmas, Boxing Day and Good Friday.

Local chapter contact: Valda (02) 9520 4921

Other information: The Hazelhurst Gallery is open to the public and is well worth a visit in its own right. Full details are available at <http://www.hazelhurst.co.au>

TCF Chapter: Miranda

City/Town: Kogarah

State: NSW

Description of Site:

A bed consisting of nine Compassionate Friends roses planted around the flagpole on the grounds of Calvary Hospital. The rose garden is flourishing and is cared for by the hospital's maintenance staff.

Significance of Site:

The roses are on the grounds of a hospital which serves as a hospice for terminally ill individuals so the site is a wonderful expression of the Compassionate Friends motto that 'we need not walk alone'.

Location of Site: 1485 91-111 Rocky Point Road, Kogarah, NSW

Map Reference: Located at the corner of Fitzgerald Avenue and Rocky Point Road in Kogarah

Access to site: Not applicable-not a public venue

Local chapter contact: Valda (02) 9520 4921

TCF Chapter: Brisbane

City/Town: Brisbane

State: QLD

Description of Site

Mt. Cootha Botanic Gardens, Brisbane. It is in an area with running water not far from the Japanese Gardens.

TCF Chapter: Townsville

City/Town: Townsville

State: QLD

Description of Site

The Townsville Chapter has a TCF memorial in Queens Gardens, Paxton Street, Townsville (near the old hospital).

TCF Chapter: TCF Mandurah

City/Town: Mandurah Site 1

State: WA

Description of Site:

Memorial Jarrah Park Bench in Mandurah Lakes memorial Cemetery, situated on a grassy slope, overlooking the lake, close to shady trees with a large shady gazebo nearby.

Significance of Site: The bench is used as a quiet place of reflection by TCF members and is the venue for the International Children's Memorial Day event on the last Sunday in January each year. The bench has an inscribed plaque dedicated to the memory of our children.

Location of Site: Stock Road, Mandurah

Map Reference: Mandurah Regional Directory Map 29 5D

Access to Site: 7.30 to 5.30 daily

Local chapter contact: Margot (08) 9535 7761

TCF Chapter: TCF Mandurah Site 2

City/Town: Rockingham

State: WA

Description of site:

Memorial Jarrah Park Bench situated on the Esplanade, opposite Florence Street, Palm Beach. The bench faces the ocean and is close to facilities.

Significance of site:

Donated by the City of Rockingham, the bench is used as a quiet place of reflection by TCF members. The bench has an inscribed plaque dedicated to the memory of our children. This is the venue for International Children's Memorial Day events on the last Sunday in January each year.

Location of site: The Esplanade, Palm Beach.

Map reference: Mandurah Regional Directory Map 8 5H

Access to site: 24 Hour access

Local chapter contact: Tina (08) 9535 7761

Please notify Heritage Site directory amendments to newsletter editor

Updated: 20:44 15 November 2006

CLOSING DATE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER

10 March 2007

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