



Welcome from the CEO

Welcome to our first Travellers Aid Australia newsletter for the year. We celebrate this with a new look and feel to our newsletter. I hope that you like it as much as we do.

I would particularly like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the new Government of Victoria led by the Premier, Mr Ted Baillieu. We have enjoyed the opportunity to collaborate with our new friends across Government, and look forward to continuing our fruitful relationship.

Much has happened at Travellers Aid Australia over the past few months. We've farewelled our Patron in Chief, Mrs Jan de Kretser, seen our services continue to strengthen and grow, initiated work on our

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new Strategic Plan, launched a service providing medical companions to travellers attending health appointments and developed a new website. You can read about these projects in this newsletter. Our staff and volunteers continue to work tirelessly to assist travellers in need and I remain extremely proud of the work we have done. We can, and do, have a significant impact on peoples' lives.

As you know, we cannot do this work without your assistance and continue to rely on your support. After reading this newsletter, please consider donating to support our work by filling out our Donations Form or visiting our website at www.travellersaid.org.au. Your assistance will help us to continue to provide assistance to travellers in need, now and in the future.

Jodie Willmer, CEO

Emergency Relief Online

Work continues on our ER Online project to provide a central booking service and point of contact for emergency travel. Testing of a booking system for purchasing flights and the development of an ER manual for those using the service are some activities that have taken place to date. An information session will be held in the coming months.

Trivia Night Fundraiser

Destination Melbourne is hosting a Trivia Night Fundraiser for us on 25 May 2011. Come along! Everyone is welcome and there are loads of prizes to be won.

Time: 6pm – 9pm

When: Wednesday 25 May 2011

Where: CQ, Level 1, 113 Queen Street, Melbourne

Cost: \$30pp (inc. GST) includes pizza and nibbles. Drinks at bar prices

Registration close: Thursday 19 May 2011. More details at www.travellersaid.org.au.

95th AGM

The date of our AGM is now confirmed. More information will be available later, but for now lock these details in your diary.

Time: 1.30pm - 3.30pm

When: Thursday 27 October 2011

Where: Yarra Room, Level 2, Melbourne Town Hall, corner Collins and Swanston Sts, Melbourne.

Mobility Equipment

We hire out Mobility Equipment at Flinders Street Station and Southern Cross Station.

- Electric scooters
- Electric / manual wheelchairs
- Prams and strollers
- Walking canes, frames, forearm crutches, walking sticks, and ID/Symbol Canes

Hourly, daily or weekly bookings available. 25% discount available for concession card holders and Travellers Aid Australia members.



Medical Companion Project

A free new service is available for regional travellers who are attending health appointments in Melbourne

On 8 March 2011, Travellers Aid Australia successfully launched a new pilot service to help regional Victorian travellers get to their medical appointments in Melbourne safely and confidently.

The Medical Companion Project is an initiative in partnership with the Victorian Government's Transport Connections Program.

Launched at the Municipal Association of Victoria's offices by the Hon. Damian Drum MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development, Mr Robert Bulmer was MC on the day. Mrs Jan de Kretser also attended proceedings.

Approximately 50,000 regional Victorians travel to Melbourne each year for medical treatment. Many rely on others to drive or accompany them to Melbourne. When assistance is unavailable, patients may risk their health by delaying appointments or not going at all.

Now trained volunteers are available to meet medical travellers at their train, taxi or bus platform at Flinders Street Station or Southern Cross Station. Volunteers will accompany patients by public transport to and from their appointment in central Melbourne. The service assists people who are able to travel independently but feel anxious about using public transport or travelling in Melbourne alone.

The program operates Monday to Friday 8am – 6pm. Out-of-hours service is possible depending on volunteer availability.

To use this free service, call 1300 700 399. Bookings are essential and a minimum 24 hours notice is required. You will need to purchase your own public transport tickets, but we will cover the cost of volunteer transport.

Want to volunteer?

Contact Fran Henry on (03) 9654 2600 or email on fran@travellersaid.org.au.

Workshops available!



We now offer Mobility & Disability Awareness Workshops for organisations and companies.

These workshops help raise awareness among your staff about ways to better engage with people with disabilities and assist staff in obtaining general knowledge and understanding about different types of disabilities.

Catering for up to 60 people at a time, our workshops include presentations from Travellers Aid Australia staff and people with disabilities, alongside

practical demonstrations on using mobility equipment within your workplace or the community.

Emma Jones, Director of Human Resources at The Westin Melbourne, said *"Our workshop was engaging and brought alive by real examples and exercises that emphasised the challenges that people with disabilities can face. Our associates obtained valuable insights. Thank you!"*

More information?

Speak to Jodie Bateman on (03) 9654 2600 or email jodieb@travellersaid.org.au

Pathways

Our Pathways to Education program continues to provide a vital service to students and families in need

to success

At Travellers Aid Australia, we help young people access education by providing annual or half-yearly travel passes to students in need.

Caulfield Park Community School is a small Government Secondary School that provides education alternatives for students with a history of poor experiences in mainstream schools. Many students, including some who travel from as far as Frankston and Narre Warren, come from socially and financially impoverished backgrounds, often making access to education difficult.

Simon Clarke, Principal at the school shared his thoughts on how the *Pathways to Education* program has assisted his students, and shared with us the story of 16-year-old Jim (not his real name). Simon noted that alongside the hard work of his staff, a travel pass has *"helped Jim improve his school attendance from approximately 40% to 90%"*.

This is an achievement that Jim himself is exceedingly proud of!

Simon also relayed that he felt that the program's benefits were four-fold, namely that:

- The program enables attendance at school to become a habit. Since education success *"comes with constant attendance"*, travel passes help students achieve positive attendance at school, thereby helping them improve their education.
- It helps ease family stresses arising from risk-taking behaviour or obtaining transport fines that families can ill-afford, subsequently helping smooth relations between students and their families.
- Travel passes allow students to develop personally by enabling them to take up new opportunities, such as employment, they could not

previously take up.

- Travel passes help students feel valued. The tickets tell his students that *"we understand you want support to get to school, and we will give it to you"*, giving students a much needed boost to their self-esteem.

The *Pathways to Education* program exists because getting to school and social activities is important.

To help students like Jim, please donate at www.travellersaid.org.au or fill out our Donations Form.





Make a difference

Since 1916 we have assisted hundreds of thousands of travellers in need, thanks to philanthropic trusts and foundations, corporate sponsorship and generous donors in our community. As living costs rise however, many people find they can only afford small donations throughout their lives.

A charitable bequest is a way to enable a long-lasting, significant difference in our work. Travellers Aid Australia's President, Bernie Delaney, chose this option to ensure the future of our work:

"I have been on the Board for 9 years and have witnessed the remarkable difference this organisation makes in the day-to-day lives of people living with mobility needs. I made the decision to include Travellers Aid Australia in my will. I urge you to do the same. By leaving a little I can make a great difference."

To leave a gift in your will that will make a difference in the lives of many, please visit www.travellersaid.org.au or contact our Fundraising Team on (03) 9654 2600 or fundraising@travellersaid.org.au.

With 90% of our 2008-2013 Strategic Plan completed, planning for a new Strategic Plan for 2011-2016 has now commenced.

Led by our Board of Directors, the new Plan is being developed with assistance from Travellers Aid Australia's Senior Management Team. Staff across City Village, Flinders Street Station and Southern Cross Station have also been consulted as part of the Plan's development.

Further information about the Plan will be available in the next newsletter. All areas of Travellers Aid Australia's strategic direction are being examined. As well as further strengthening our services to our clients, the new Plan seeks to review Travellers Aid Australia's expansion and development opportunities. Ways that we can increase our advocacy role regarding transport disadvantage is also another priority currently being examined. Stay tuned for more details later!

Strategic Plan 2011-2016





New Travellers Aid Australia website

Travellers Aid Australia's new website is ready to go!

www.travellersaid.org.au

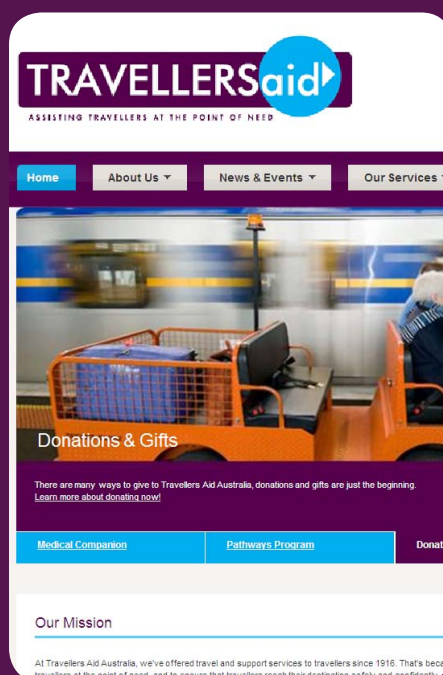
Our new, user-friendly website represents a major step in our ongoing client, fundraising and branding outreach initiatives.

Our new look website has been developed in line with Travellers Aid Australia's branding and seeks to provide clear, simple information about what we offer to all our key audiences. That includes:

- our members
- clients
- the general public
- media
- our supporters.

The website has been developed with assistance from Infoxchange. Features on the website include:

- **Improved accessibility** for people with disabilities.
- **The ability to sign up** for our newsletter.
- **A translation function** that provides information in languages other than English.
- **A dedicated services section** providing details about all our services, including the Medical Companion Project, Buggy & Personal Guidance Service and Travellers Aid Access Service (TAAS).



“A simple and effective way to contribute to Travellers Aid Australia’s services”

- **A donations area** that will make it easier for people like you to contribute to Travellers Aid Australia the way you feel best.
- **A News & Events section** with dedicated space for upcoming events and media releases.

- **Employment Opportunities** and **Volunteer** pages, which allow people to submit their resume to us for keeping on file.
- **The ability to request services** such as medical companions or mobility equipment online.

Tammy Schlitz, Travellers Aid Australia's Fundraising Manager is especially excited about the launch of the new website.

“The new website will act as a major platform for our future donations and fundraising efforts,” she said.

“As well as keeping all our supporters informed, it will provide people with a simple and effective way to contribute financially to Travellers Aid Australia’s services”.

We hope that you will enjoy our new website as much as we do! Hop online and take a peek.

If you like, please feel free to contact us with your feedback. We would love to hear from you!

Visit our new website at www.travellersaid.org.au

Staff Profile: Fran Henry



Meet Fran, our new Medical Companion Project Coordinator...

Thank you Mrs de Kretser

On behalf of President Bernie Delaney, our Board, staff and volunteers, we extend our sincere gratitude to Mrs Jan de Kretser who acted as Travellers Aid Australia's Patron in Chief for five years. We highly value Mrs de Kretser's Patronage, interest in our services for travellers in need and passion for social justice, equity and fairness. We also appreciate the time Mrs de Kretser made to recognise the efforts of our volunteers and to attend and speak at our key events including our Annual General Meetings, and most recently our Medical Companion Project launch. With the appointment of a new Governor of Victoria, we send our best wishes to Mrs de Kretser, Professor de Kretser and their family, and congratulate Mrs de Kretser on a job well done! Mrs Elizabeth Chernov, wife of newly appointed Governor of Victoria, the Honourable Alex Chernov, AO, QC has recently been invited to act as our new Patron in Chief.

What is your role at Travellers Aid Australia?

I coordinate the Medical Companion Project. In tandem with Transport Connections, we started setting up the program in January 2011.

Then we launched the service on 8

March 2011! Now I focus on coordinating our trained volunteers, promoting the service in the metropolitan area and developing booking and reporting systems.

What is the most enjoyable aspect of your role?

I like setting up a project from scratch. It's an exciting and amazing learning experience and so rewarding to see something that you've worked hard on up and running. I also have an amazing group of dedicated volunteers and I feel blessed for that. The feedback from clients is fantastic.

What did you do before joining us?

I worked for a small non-governmental organisation in Ecuador called Yanapuma. I started out as Group Leader in 2008, managing volunteers working on community development projects in rural communities for three month periods. In 2009 I took over as Director of the Volunteer Program. I stayed in Ecuador for three years before returning to Australia at the end of 2010.

Why were you attracted to this role?

I am attracted to the community service element. I am lucky to be involved in such a great initiative in my hometown. The service offers support to encourage independence in Victorians, helping them feel confident about travelling to Melbourne. So important when travelling for your health! We love hearing clients tell us that we made their trip so clear and simple, they'll be able to do it on their own the next time!





Vale Flo Parnaby BEM

We note with sadness the passing of Life Member, Mrs Florence (Flo) Parnaby BEM on 22 February 2011

A tireless and dedicated worker in church and community groups, Flo joined Travellers Aid Australia through the Girls' Friendly Society, making a significant contribution to our organisation.

Flo served a total of 9 years as President of the Travellers Aid Society of Victoria during the 1970s and 1980s. While it is difficult to capture all of Flo's contributions in one article, Flo was much involved in the sale of the old Lodge and the establishment of Travellers Aid Australia's city centre. Indeed the "My Ladies Lounge" at 182 Collins Street, which was offered in very run-down condition, ended up a very successful venture with Flo's involvement. Flo also represented Travellers Aid Australia on organisations including the National Council of Women, Council for the Homeless and the Australia Day Council. She was also involved with the National body that linked up affiliated states, even taking on the role of National President.

Flo was awarded the Order of the British Empire for her community service, a deserved accolade given that (in her own words) she was "born with a responsibility to the community". Flo also enjoyed travelling, journeying to destinations including South America, India and the UK.

Our condolences and thanks go to Flo's son, Mr Ried Parnaby, and Mrs Dorothy Hobson BEM for sharing their memories with us. As Mrs Hobson notes, "Flo made such a tremendous contribution to so many aspects of the work of Travellers Aid....[we have] been blessed to have had her as a great supporter over many years".

We remember, with gratitude.

Photo: Flo Parnaby BEM, Joan Patterson, Des O'Shea, Mark Mitchell, Dorothy Hobson BEM.

Farewell Bev!

We sadly say goodbye to our wonderful volunteer receptionist Bev Gojkovic who has retired. Bev became our Thursday & Friday receptionist when we relocated to Bourke Street. Always a pleasant and happy friendly face on our reception desk, Bev was initially terrified of using the computer! Now she is very capable of sorting through emails, doing research... and looking at flights to Queensland to escape Melbourne's winter! Bev will be missed by all, but we wish her well as a 'lady of leisure'. Best of luck Bev!

Congratulations!

Tammy Schlitz, our Fundraising Manager, wedded the man of her dreams in early March. Well done Tammy!

Welcome!

We welcome Hilary Fisher as our new Marketing & Media Manager. Fran Henry has also joined Travellers Aid Australia as our new Medical Companion Project Coordinator.

Volunteers needed!

Travellers Aid Australia is always looking out for more volunteers, including those keen to share their experiences about disability at our Mobility & Disability Awareness Workshops. To express interest, simply visit our website at www.travellersaid.org.au.



CONTACT DETAILS & OPENING HOURS

If you would like to contact Travellers Aid Australia or use any of our services, here's how:

City Village (Head Office)

Level 3
225 Bourke Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

T: (03) 9654 2600
F: (03) 9654 1926
E: info@travellersaid.org.au

Mon – Fri: 9.00am – 5.00pm

Southern Cross Station

Main Concourse
99 Spencer Street
Docklands VIC 3000

Under the Bourke Street Bridge
opposite the Luggage Hall

T: (03) 9670 2072
F: (03) 9600 1174
E: scs@travellersaid.org.au

Mon – Sun: 7.00am - 10.00pm

Flinders Street Station

Main Concourse
Cnr Flinders Street &
Swanston Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Between Platforms 9 & 10

T: (03) 9610 2030
F: (03) 9614 1249
E: fss@travellersaid.org.au

Sun - Thurs: 8.00am - 8.00pm
Fri - Sat: 8.00am - 10.00pm

Travellers Aid Access Service (TAAS)

Friendly and professional service offering support workers to assist people with disabilities and older people with personal care needs.

Southern Cross Station

Mon - Fri: 10.00am – 5.00pm
Sat - Sun: 11.00am – 4.00pm

Flinders Street Station

Sun-Thurs: 8.00am – 8.00pm
Fri - Sat: 8.00am – 10.00pm

Emergency Relief Assistance

This service is available at Southern Cross Station and operates via appointment. Please telephone prior to coming in.

T: (03) 9670 2873
E: er@travellersaid.org.au

Southern Cross Station

Mon - Fri: 9.30am – 4.00pm



Visit us at
www.travellersaid.org.au
or follow us on Twitter and Facebook.