

# between the lines

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december 2011



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## CSS celebrates a successful 2010–11 at Annual General Meeting



From left to right: Alyson Miller, Derek Humphery-Smith, Sean Hogan, Nicholas Voudouris, Lynette O'Loughlin, Arthur Papakotsias and Ron Forsyth

CSS Chair, Nicholas Voudouris, announced the re-election of Sean Hogan (Deputy Chair), Michael Grigoletto (Secretary), Lynette O'Loughlin (Finance Director), Ron Forsyth and Arthur Papakotsias to the Board of Directors for the 2011–12 financial year and acknowledged their valuable contribution to the organisation.

Nicholas also welcomed new Board Member, Derek Humphery-Smith. Derek is the head of the National Workplace Relations and Safety Group at Lander & Rogers law firm and practices in all areas of workplace relations and safety law, operating extensively across both the public and private sectors. ▶

## number crunch

No. of received calls between January 1 – October 31, 2011:

MLA inbound .....	37 996
MLA call backs .....	4 370
Suicide Services inbound (SLV and SCBS) .....	16 035
Suicide Services call backs (SLV and SCBS) .....	616
<i>beyondblue</i> info line .....	46 869
Veterans and ASL .....	5 895

Crisis Support Services held its 2011 Annual General Meeting at the Australian Croatian Association on Thursday October 27. With more than 50 guests in attendance, the AGM provided a fantastic opportunity to bring together CSS Board Members, CSS staff and representatives of organisations across Australia.

CSS CEO, Alyson Miller spoke with great pride on the vital work of CSS and reflected on the many diverse achievements of the 2010–11 financial year.

Audio recordings of

caller feedback were a highlight of the event and a poignant reminder of why the organisation is so passionate about listening to and supporting members of the community when they contact CSS in times of need.



# CEO's column

Welcome to the final edition of *Between the Lines* for 2011. It has been a great pleasure to re-introduce you to CSS' bi-monthly newsletter this year and keep you informed about the key projects taking place in our busy organisation. I do hope it has been a useful and informative read.

In this edition, we introduce an exciting new range of marketing materials for the Department of Health and Ageing's ATAPS After-Hours Suicide Support Line. The launch of this material coincides with the services expansion this financial year to support all 106 Divisions of General Practice with after-hours support for their patients.

Our Human Resources and Administration team have been busy coordinating a staff satisfaction survey including the facilitation of focus groups to share the preliminary findings and encourage ideas from staff to inform development strategies. It's immensely pleasing to know that so many staff are keen to support CSS in becoming an employer of choice.

Thank you to everyone who took time out of their busy lives to attend our Annual General Meeting on October 27. It was a fantastic evening of celebrating our achievements in the 2010–11 financial year, a time of challenge and opportunity. Thank you to our Marketing and Communication team for coordinating

a seamless event and showcasing our work in all its professionalism and vibrancy. I am truly proud to be part of this organisation and the work we do. With the end of the calendar year fast approaching, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our staff for their hard work and dedication to Crisis Support Services, and our funders for their continuing support and faith in CSS.

On page five, Matthew mentions that life is full of suffering, but it is important to suffer well. Leading into Christmas and the New Year, we continue to staff our line 24/7 to support people through what can be a difficult time. I would like to extend my best wishes for a safe and happy festive



Alyson Miller

season to all our staff and supporters as we continue our work to support the community in times of need.

Alyson Miller

CEO

## CSS celebrates a successful 2010–11 at Annual General Meeting continued



Stan Piperoglou

◀ CSS was pleased to welcome guest speaker, Mr Stan Piperoglou, Director of the Suicide Prevention Section in the Mental Health Chronic Disease Division

of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing. Stan spoke of the promising future for the mental health and suicide prevention sector and the positive relationship that exists between CSS and the Department.

A new design for the CSS website and the JIGSAW Community Services Database was launched at the AGM and guests were given the opportunity to be first to navigate through these online resources in their refreshed state. Web Development Manager, Pierz Newton-John, and Online Content Coordinator, Rhona Rees, worked diligently to create a fresh,

contemporary image and were on hand to showcase the sites at the AGM.

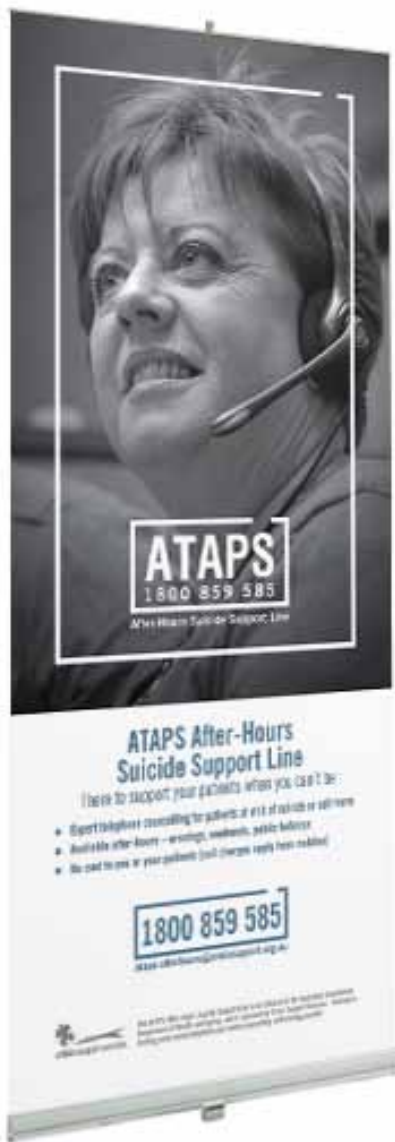
The Board was satisfied that CSS is meeting its clearly defined operational and strategic directions, and that sound financial procedures and reporting methods are in place and are of a high standard. CSS' 2010/11 financial statements were approved with a clean bill of health given by external auditors, Bentleys Melbourne Partnership. Well done to Ann-Maree and the finance team.

The 2010–11 Annual and Financial Reports were launched at the meeting and you can find

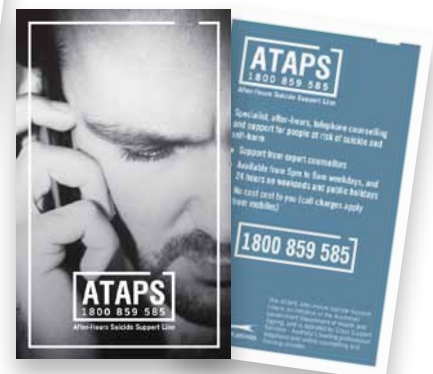
a copy of the 2010–11 Annual Report by visiting [www.crisissupport.org.au](http://www.crisissupport.org.au) or contacting CSS reception on (03) 8371 2800.



# new collateral paints a picture for the ATAPS After-Hours Suicide Support Line



The new range of materials includes banners (example above) and below from left to right: brochure, tip sheet and referral card.



The Marketing and Communication team are pleased to introduce the new range of materials for the Department of Health and Ageing's (DoHA) ATAPS After-Hours Suicide Support Line.

This range of tools was developed by the Marketing and Communication team alongside the Suicide Services team. The tools will be used to promote the ATAPS After-Hours Suicide Support Line to GPs, mental health professionals, allied health professionals and patients. An important part of the development process was the creation of a comprehensive style guide giving the ATAPS After-Hours Suicide Support Line its own brand identity so it is easy recognised within the community.

The ATAPS After-Hours Suicide Support Line suite of materials includes referral cards, consumer brochure, and tip sheets designed to help health professionals understand the referral process. The teams worked closely with DoHA, to write content for each tool to ensure each piece of collateral conveys the right message for the two key stakeholders of this service – health professionals and callers to the line.

CSS counsellors Alicia Mitic, Felicity Martin and Mathew Bishop said the new promotional material communicates the nature of the service very clearly. "There is often confusion over the nature of the ATAPS After-Hours service offering, so it is great to see concise and clear materials available which answer the main question – what is the service and how can clients be referred," they said.

Positive feedback was received from delegates at the 2011 Australian General Practice Network National Forum. "The materials are great in terms of educating professionals like myself and my patients about the nature and availability of the ATAPS service," a GP said.

The national ATAPS After-Hours Suicide Support Line is a free, specialised, telephone counselling service, designed to support patients of the ATAPS Suicide Prevention Service after-hours, when their allied health provider is not available. Through this service CSS works alongside GPs, mental health professionals and allied health professionals to support patients at-risk of suicide or self-harm.

CSS would like to thank Denise McAloon, CSS counsellor, for putting her face to the campaign.

# staff have their say in satisfaction survey and focus groups

To better understand staff perceptions and dynamics of the organisation, a staff satisfaction survey was conducted in October. The survey sought responses to sixty one questions around key subjects which included areas such as leadership, communication, employment conditions, recognition and work/life balance.

After achieving an outstanding fifty nine percent response rate from the organisation's staff group of more than 140, focus group sessions were conducted. These groups further explored the results of the survey and sought ideas and comments about

strategies for improvement. Twenty five participants from across the organisation attended three sessions and have generated some excellent strategies which will begin to enhance the culture within CSS.

The Human Resources and Administration team were extremely pleased with the response rate and wish to thank everyone who took the time to 'join the conversation'.

"So much of the success of the survey rests with staff buy-in and participation and everyone who contributed had well thought out comments and suggestions.

This is all a testament to the caliber of staff we have here at CSS – everyone working together to make the organisation a better place to work," HR General Manager Jade MacLeod said.

A final report is now being prepared for dissemination and it is anticipated this will be ready by mid January. Strategies for development will then be implemented in the coming year.



Staff brainstorm ideas in groups

## counselling corner

**Thinking About Suicide: Contemplating and comprehending the urge to die. Written by David Webb**

Dr David Webb prefaces this book by stating that the 'first and most precious audience' that he seeks are those considering suicide, those having suicidal thoughts and 'lived feelings' whom he invites to 'honour and respect (these) feelings as real'. This introduction sets the tone for his book where he speaks with utmost respect and compassion for the suicidal. Himself a survivor of several suicide attempts in the 1970s and 80s he speaks with understanding of the depths of despair, of the spiritual/existential emptiness and loss of

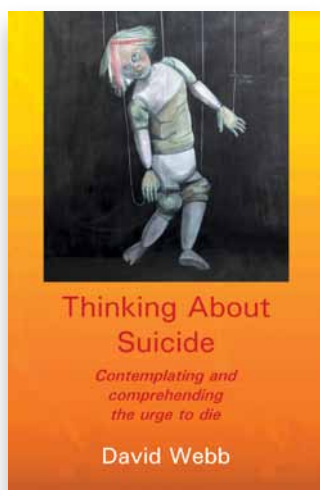
meaning that caused him to want to end his life.

Another strong tenet of the book is Webb's attempt to give a voice to the suicidal person which he has found is lacking in 'suicidology'. This science instead 'pathologises and medicalises' the issue much to the detriment of healing and survival. Webb also allocates a significant portion of this book to the 'mythology' surrounding suicide including that 'depression is a major cause of suicide' which he disputes. 'To listen to someone else's story without judgement, and resisting the urge to offer advice, is the first and most important gift we can offer the suicidal person' according to Webb.

However for Webb it was the point at which 'all the stories had to stop' that he began the spiritual journey of 'self-enquiry' that prompted him to face his 'inner silence' and to 'meet myself for the first time to discover peace and freedom'. There is so much more to this book and I consider it to be essential reading for anyone involved in caring for vulnerable human beings.

**Reviewed by Lena Mazza – MensLine Australia Counsellor**

*After six of years of service, Lena has moved on from CSS. She will be missed by everyone within the organisation and we look forward to seeing her in the future as a casual counsellor.*



# five minutes with Matthew Bishop

Matthew joined CSS in 2010, after participating in the internship. Mathew works as a counsellor for suicide services.

What is your earliest memory?

Emu hunting with my Dad. I remember him hitting the brakes on the ute, grabbing the gun, jumping out, and me looking out to a glorious line of emus running in a line angled to us like the hand of a clock to its pivot. We used to eat them.

When I was younger I wanted to be...

In primary school I wanted to be an archaeologist. My Mum used to scare me into brushing my teeth by warning me that nobody would take seriously an archaeologist who, for lack of teeth, couldn't pronounce big words.

Who would you most like to sit next to at a dinner party (person dead or alive)?

T.E.Lawrence ('of Arabia'): a peace-loving scholar pressed into war-time service. Churchill described him as the great hero of the age, and Simone Weil as possessing to a rare degree a profound spirit of justice and equality. He sought sanctuary from his troubled emotions by entering 100mph on his Brough Superior motorcycle.

What do you usually serve when you have friends for dinner?

Whatever somebody else has cooked.

What's your favourite Melbourne place to visit?

Any place left over from the nineteenth century. My tumbledown Carlton house is 130 years old, and I love both it and the suburb.

What are three things you can't live without?

First of all motorcycling. It's a contemplative activity, being in and moving through spaces both natural and humanised while – from the seat of a vintage motorcycle – sensing the ghosts of past times. Second, philosophical conversation and thought. Third, counselling when it comes out of that kind of thinking.



Matthew Bishop

What do you enjoy about working at CSS?

I get to be a counsellor.

What has been your most fulfilling moment during your time at CSS?

I particularly treasure the ongoing counselling I do on the Suicide Call Back Service. It's very fulfilling to hear at times that a conversation has led to a shift in perspective that has made a (positive) difference in the way a person is suffering. Life is full of suffering, but it's important to suffer well.

## CSS out and about

### An insight into Borderline Personality Disorder

Representatives of CSS attended the Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) Conference, organised by the Victorian Mental Health Carers Network for consumers, health professionals and carers at Darebin Arts Centre on October 5.

Rosy DeCastella, Team Leader of Suicide Services, Andrew Graham and Vic Walmsley from Quality Assurance attended this fully-booked conference

which drew significant community interest.

The main speakers were consumers Flick Grey and Merinda Epstein of The Consumer Place, who discussed their perspectives of experiencing a constant of raw emotion as if they are living without a protective skin and this being an on-going state regardless of experience, learned management strategies or supports.

Another key speaker, Dr Andrew Chan from Orygen, spoke about Orygen's early intervention program which

recognises that problematic behaviours don't just start when adolescents first come into contact with mental health services. The program reduces the criteria for treatment at an early stage to gain improved understanding and management.

The conference confirmed CSS's approach to known BPD callers in using an 'acknowledging, confirming, and consultative' approach, encouraging self-agency without attempting to gain a commitment to safety in contrast and distinct from other callers.

### Presentations at industry events

Randal Newton-John presented at the Family Relationships Services 2011 conference on how MLA can increase access to family and relationship support through innovative online service delivery. Christopher Groot represented CSS in a 'Meet the Experts' session at the General Practitioners Conference and Exhibition, speaking on how CSS clinical teleweb services support GPs towards an unflinching system of care for suicidal patients.

# spotlight on Executive Team

The Executive Leadership Team, comprising the Chief Executive Officer, Alyson Miller and several senior management executives, oversees the management of Crisis Support Services under the direction of the Board of Directors. This team meets on a weekly basis to share information on their departments' achievements; discuss challenges and resolve issues; set direction and implement strategies for the organisation; and discuss opportunities to further CSS' work in supporting Australians through their most challenging times.

Often referred to as "the exec", it is this team who ensures our organisation works together to provide quality services for the community on behalf of our funders while supporting our employees.

The departments led by the Executive Leadership Team are what make our organisation. In previous editions of *Between the Lines* in 2011, we have shone the 'Spotlight On' four CSS departments – Information and Communications Technology; Human Resources and Administration; Finance; and Research and Innovation – to provide more information on their function, priorities and team members. In 2012, we will profile the remaining teams in *Between the Lines* to share the important work they each do to ensure CSS remains Australia's leading provider of specialist telephone and online counselling, and training.



Christopher Groot  
Director of Research and Innovation



Donna Gross  
Business Development Manager



Robyn McAskill  
Executive Officer



Jade MacLeod  
General Manager – Human Resources and Administration



Ellise McLoughlan  
General Manager – Marketing and Communication



Alyson Miller  
Chief Executive Officer



Randal Newton-John  
General Manager – Commercial



James Traficante  
General Manager – Information and Communications Technology



Ann-Maree Smith  
Chief Financial Officer

## a word from our callers

"I first called MensLine Australia more than two years ago during a very difficult time. Soon after my son was born, my then partner took him from my care and refused to let me see him. What followed was an emotionally horrific time as I dealt with the grief I was feeling and then the daily stress, pain and frustration that came with going through the court process. MensLine Australia was recommended to me and I started using the

service regularly to get me through. Calling the number whenever I needed really worked for me. MensLine played a big part in getting me through in periods when I was not seeing my son and was thinking "I don't want to keep going with this life". It has allowed me to talk things through and come to an acceptance of what's happened in my life. I've now been able to reduce my use of MensLine but I know it's always there."

Joe, MensLine Australia caller

"I want to express my deepest gratitude for the service provided by the *beyondblue* info line. Both my sons experienced depression after having strokes and I want to thank the counsellor who took my call as the resources they recommended really helped me in that challenging time."

Annie, *beyondblue* info line caller



# five minutes with David Broderick

David joined CSS in 2009 as a counsellor on the *beyondblue* info line and currently works on suicide services and as a relief Counselling Manager.

**What is your earliest memory?**

I recall burying my 'Luke Skywalker' Starwars figurine in our sandpit. No doubt, if I had kept Luke in his original packaging he'd probably be worth more than my car by now.

**When I was younger I wanted to be...**

MacGyver! That guy could build a nuclear reactor using nothing but lint and a pocket knife. Also, he had great hair and truly awesome one-liners. He was a renaissance man for the modern generation.

**Who would you most like to sit next to at a dinner party (person dead or alive)?**

I'd like to be seated between Kurt Vonnegut (author) and Bill Hicks (comedian).

**What do you usually serve when you have friends for dinner?**

Cold beer and good times. I confess to being a dunce in the kitchen, thus my wife handles culinary duties and is an excellent cook.

**What's your favourite Melbourne place to visit?**

As a runner nothing beats running through Sherbrooke forest (Mount Dandenong) on a wet and wintry morning. It might sound odd but the rain makes for a pretty tranquil experience and often brings out the wallabies and native wildlife.

**What are three things you can't live without?**

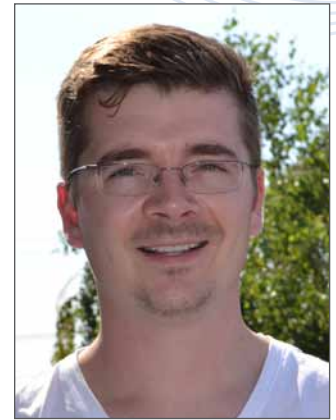
My Filofax diary (read: safety blanket), my CD collection, and my glasses.

**What do you enjoy about working at CSS?**

The camaraderie shared between such an empathic, clever, and humorous crew never gets old. I also get a thrill out of the emotional and intellectual engagement inherent in our line of work. Special mention goes to the CSS massage chair.

**What has been your most fulfilling moment during your time at CSS?**

No single moment stands out above all others, however it is energising when we are able to provide meaningful engagement and support to a caller who begins the call with "You probably can't help me, but...". Engaging with callers who are feeling helpless or emotionally stuck is often challenging and fulfilling.



David Broderick

## our supporters



Google Grants is an ongoing supporter of CSS through the provision of Google AdWords™ advertising for the MensLine Australia website. MensLine

Australia advertising appears when particular search terms are used in Google. This ensures more men are aware of the services available to them, and provides a vital link into the support MensLine Australia offers.



CSS are extremely grateful for the generous support we receive from Leader Community Newspapers. Leader are key providers

of local news to the Victorian community, and regularly publish pro-bono advertisements of our vital services throughout their many publications.



# hatches, matches and congrats

Susan Williams, CSS counsellor, runs a philanthropic jewellery business, with 100 per cent of the profits going to CanTeen, a national support organisation for 12-24 year olds who are living with cancer. Susan supports CanTeen through her business ventures "for the sheer love of it and for the good feeling I get out of helping others, which is an amazing feeling." Susan's jewellery is currently available from Post Industrial Design in Barkley Street West Footscray.

In July Rhona Rees, Online Communications Coordinator, won a trip to Nepal through an internet competition called 'Friends Foreverest' (with some help from her friends at CSS). She and her friend Stacey

made the trek to Base Camp at 5364m above sea level this September.

Liz Slattery, Suicide Services Project Officer, spent seven blissful weeks travelling London, Scotland, Ireland, France, Italy and Germany! "Most memorable moment was kayaking 500m out into the Mediterranean by myself in Nice, France. Just me and the big blue," said Liz.



Liz Slattery in Paris



Rhona Rees treks Everest Base Camp

## next edition

Between the Lines will return in the new year! Please send ideas for the next edition (February) of Between the Lines to Courtney Collier (ccollier@crisissupport.org.au) by Friday 27 January 2012.

# welcome to the team

A warm welcome to the following staff who joined the organisation between September and October 2011.

Casey Howden  
Counsellor  
Cadence Williamson  
Counsellor  
Carly Burgess  
Team Leader, *beyondblue*  
Melissa Lethbridge  
Counsellor  
Melanie Smerdon  
Counsellor  
David Belasic  
Counsellor

Paul Steel  
Counsellor  
Michaela Hall  
Counsellor  
Irene Lewis-Hansom  
Team Leader, Men's Services  
Kim Billington  
Counsellor  
Justin Carden  
Counsellor  
Alice Hucker  
Counsellor  
Sofia Stagnitta  
Counsellor

## what's on

On Friday 30 September CSS held a Grand Final morning tea where staff enjoyed a selection of treats whilst debating who would take the premiership between Collingwood and Geelong.

On Monday 31st October Staff Connect helped celebrate Melbourne Cup at Maribyrnong Street. Also being Halloween, staff shared some scary goodies!

CSS will celebrate a wonderful year at the staff Christmas party with drinks and canapés at the Maribyrnong Street office on Wednesday 14 December from 4pm.



Ann Beck and James Traficante



Staff share some tasty treats



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