

# Shoulder - to - Shoulder

The quarterly newsletter of Road Trauma Support Services Victoria Inc.

Autumn 2010

## A RACV/RTSS Community Partnership "A Warm Embrace" Project

It is with great excitement that RTSS announces it has been named a RACV Community Partner for 2010.

The project is titled "A Warm Embrace" and its objective is to pilot innovative support and counselling options for people suffering grief and trauma reactions due to road trauma. The project will target geographical, cultural and generational gaps to increase accessibility of support for those impacted by road trauma in outer metropolitan and regional areas

Currently counselling services are presently offered face to face from our Blackburn head office, and by telephone statewide. Whilst we are a statewide service, our face to face counselling service is difficult to access for clients from rural areas as well as for people from more distant parts of greater metropolitan Melbourne. The RACV funding allows for the trial of face-to-face support in other metro and regional areas.

As a complement to the professional counselling, individual and group based peer support is also offered. Availability of this aspect of our service is also limited for many in rural and outer metro areas, due to distance and accessibility. The project will explore what support options, such as internet platforms, maybe of help to our clients. At the conclusion of the project RTSS will be much better placed for future planning and have clear indications as to the likely viability of specific client care and support options.

These innovative forms of care and support will help to ease the burden of mental suffering for road trauma victims, provide information and education about grief and trauma reactions, and provide amenable and accessible options in terms of individual and group based support.

Our sincere thanks to all at the RACV for their support of the "A Warm Embrace" Project.

**Gail Carland**  
Manager, Community Relations



## "Support at the Time of Need"

Another project currently underway is the "Support at the Time of Need" project. This is a joint partnership between RTSS and Victoria Police and has been funded by the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust and Victoria Police.

The scope of the project is to produce a communication tool to be provided by Police members, often attending at the scene, to people impacted upon by road trauma.

The tool would have information about trauma and grief resulting from a collision, and would provide contact details for services able to offer assistance, such as RTSS, thereby enabling early intervention.

The project also aims to determine whether the provision of a triage system is beneficial.

Currently a variety of support and assistance is available to people who may be affected by road trauma however knowing who, where, when and how to access this support can be difficult.

RTSS and Victoria Police acknowledge the generous support of the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust and are grateful for their assistance.

**Gail Carland**  
Manager, Community Relations



Helen  
Macpherson  
Smith  
Trust



## RTSS Board of Management

The RTSS Board of Management is delighted to announce the appointment of two new Board members. Mike Flower joins the Board in the position of Honorary Treasurer, following the departure of Ian Mikkelsen, and Jenny Reece brings her expertise in fundraising and marketing to the Board to assist in raising the organisation's profile.

### Mike Flower (*right*)

Mike has recently concluded a 30-year career with ANZ, where he had been a CEO/GM, running businesses and leading culturally diverse teams in Australia and Overseas.

His passion is for people and service excellence; helping individuals see their potential and a path to its realisation, driving client value through the understanding and delivery of compelling and sustainable service propositions.

Currently looking for a senior executive opportunity in the finance/business services sector, Mike is undertaking Executive Coaching and Consulting work, while exploring ways of leveraging his extensive experience for the benefit of the broader community.

Mike is an accredited Coach through the Institute of Executive Coaching, a Fellow of the Financial Services Institute of Australasia and a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Married to Chris and father of 4 adult children, Mike's interests include public speaking, gardening, travel and the AFL team Western Bulldogs.



### Jenny Reece (*left*)

Jenny has nearly 20 years experience in the non profit sector, most recently as chief executive officer of Cystic Fibrosis Victoria (CFV), an organisation providing a diverse range of support and advocacy services for people with cystic fibrosis and their families.

Jenny has previously held the positions of public relations and fundraising manager at Southern Cross Care, one of Victoria's largest aged care providers, community relations manager with Berry Street where she managed their public relations and fundraising, and talking newspaper coordinator at Vision Australia overseeing their state-wide service for print handicapped people.

Jenny had worked in Melbourne television prior to entering the non profit sector including four years at Channel 7 as a director's assistant in live television.

Jenny is tertiary qualified in public relations and has been a member of the Fundraising Institute Australia for over 20 years. She enjoys a busy social life with her partner Peter who is also retired.



### RTSS Board of Management

Our Board is made up of a group of dedicated people who give selflessly of their time. They are:

Jilane Matinga - President

Fleur Bitcon - Vice President

Mike Flower - Honorary Treasurer

Ann Holland - Board Secretary

Andy Calder

Kevin Bockholt

Jenny Reece

## Message from the Executive Officer

Whilst many have been off enjoying the summer break, here at RTSS things have been moving at quite a pace!. It has been a very enjoyable first few months for myself at the organization and I would like to extend my gratitude to all the staff, volunteers and stakeholders who have helped me settle in and made me feel so welcome. We have a large agenda for 2010 and all help is gratefully received.

In the coming months we will be calling upon our valuable "human" resources. As you will have read, we have some additions to our Board with a wealth of experience, we also have a number of other volunteers with skills and stories that we are yet to link in to, and we have stakeholders such as the TAC, Victoria Police and RACV who have knowledge to aid in our road trauma and safety work. All of these people are vital to the success of RTSS and my role is to ensure that we are making the most of our partnerships and that they are mutually beneficial.

You will read in this edition, that we have made some great progress in some of our special projects, and this has occurred whilst we continue to focus on our core responsibility of providing invaluable counselling and road safety education services

**Sarah Smyth**  
Executive Officer

## Heartfelt thanks Tenix

It was reported in the Spring 2009 edition of Shoulder-to-Shoulder, in August last year that the Tenix Solutions Social Club and Community Involvement Committee hosted their annual trivia night with all proceeds coming to RTSS.

We are delighted to report that the evening raised over \$4,000 and that this amount was very generously matched by the Tenix Foundation.

Without the generosity of organisations such as Tenix Solutions and its staff, Road Trauma Support Services would not be able to continue to provide support to members of the Victorian community affected by road trauma.

**Gail Carland**  
Manager, Community Relations

## Margie Coe

### Office/Education Programme Administrator

Margie joined RTSS in October 2008. What was meant to be a two week stint of fill-in clerical duties has turned into a permanent position for Margie and a great asset for RTSS!

Margie's employment background includes 12 years at Defence Signals Directorate, 7 years at Roy Morgan Research (political pollsters) and several years as a retail manager.

As a professional and caring introduction to the organisation, Margie takes calls ranging from distressed clients seeking immediate counselling and support, to anxious callers seeking a Road Trauma Awareness Seminar (RTAS) booking, often when their preferred date and location has already been booked out.

Margie manages the day to day administration of the RTAS programmes from the booking of all 14 state-wide venues, staffing the seminars with an educator, volunteer and emergency service speaker as well booking in up to 100 or more participants every month.

Margie also managed to provide a warm and welcoming reception environment for counselling clients attending our Blackburn office.



RTSS is proudly supported by:



### RTSS offers...

- Support to the injured, family members and friends of those who have died or were injured, drivers, and witnesses of road crashes
- Free individual support and counselling with qualified counsellors
- Peer support from volunteers who really understand
- Information and referral to supporting agencies
- Support and debriefing for groups
- Education for traffic offenders in conjunction with the Courts
- Presentations to community and service groups, businesses etc.

#### Contributions to this newsletter:

We welcome and encourage contributions of articles and news items, but cannot accept anonymous contributions. Editorial right is reserved.

Please submit in word format to

[gail.carland@rtssv.org.au](mailto:gail.carland@rtssv.org.au)  
or in hardcopy to the Blackburn office by 10 May 2010 for the Winter edition.

## Education

2009 saw RTSS working closely with Victoria Police on both a local and state-wide level to deliver road safety messages and information about our services. Many Police now recommend traffic offenders attend Road Trauma Awareness Seminars as part of their sentencing.

Our work alongside Victoria Police continues during 2010 with our participation in a Community Forum being held by Melton Police in February. Along with Professor Max Cameron from the Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC), representatives from the Major Collisions Investigation Unit and Melton Traffic Management Unit, RTSS will speak to teenagers and their parents about road safety and the consequences of not adhering to the road rules and laws. Victoria Police acknowledge the support RTSS staff and volunteers provide to ensure these forums are successful.

In the first quarter of 2010 we will commence delivering our Road Trauma Awareness Seminars in Warrnambool. Funding for this has been provided by the Ray & Joyce Uebergang Foundation, and we would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank them.

A key focus for the education area in 2010 is the evaluation of our education programmes. We look forward to working with MUARC on this project and also the involvement of the Magistrates' Court and Victoria Police who will be assisting us with the provision of historical data. We will be working on the evaluation throughout 2010 and will report on progress in future editions of Shoulder-to-Shoulder.

**Christine Harrison**  
**Manager, Education Programmes**

## Counselling and Support

Counselling and support services ended 2009 on a high note with increased numbers of new referrals in both November and December.

Prior to Christmas we received advice of our successful application for an RACV Community Partnership, which is a fantastic opportunity for us. This will allow us to pilot outer metro Melbourne and regional, face to face counselling, as well as exploring innovative, telephone and internet based, personal and group support options.

At the same time we have been invited to contribute an article to "Grief Matters", the quarterly journal of the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement. This article is entitled "Trauma Matters Too" and gives an overview of the various ways in which different client groups are affected by road trauma, considers specific issues that arise in counselling, and discusses our counselling objectives in working with grieving and traumatised clients.

We are working with the Victoria Police Major Collisions Investigation Unit on a project to develop a business card sized information/ promotional fold-out which can be distributed at collision scenes. We are also very pleased to have secured the services of Rob Gordon a local psychologist and trauma expert, who will facilitate some group supervision sessions with counselling staff. The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement invited us to be part of the training, delivering a day session on road trauma: care and support in the counselling setting. In the coming months we will be scheduling another round of peer supporter training.

So, lots on the go at the moment. 2010 is shaping up to be a busy, exciting time!

**John Downes**  
**Manager, Counselling and Support**

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