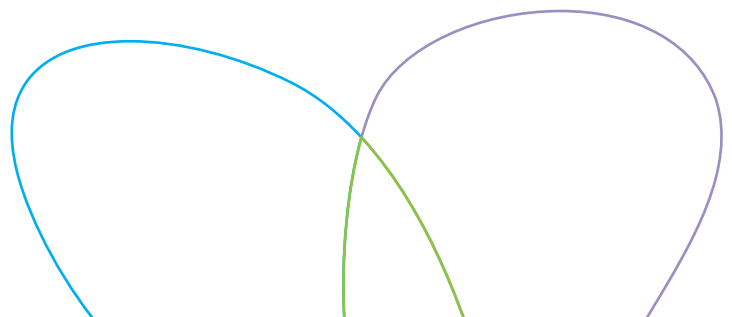


emerge

australia

Annual Report 2015



Mission:

To support, provide information and advocacy for people associated with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME)/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS).

Vision:

Universal awareness and acknowledgement of ME/CFS as a medical condition.

Values:

To serve the best interests of people affected by ME/CFS with integrity, compassion and empathy.

Strategic Plan 2014-2017

Established in 1980, the Society has been working with people affected by ME/CFS and associated conditions for over 34 years. In an environment where the condition has received very little acknowledgment, even less research has been undertaken and people affected have been unacknowledged and suffered for that lack of recognition, the work of the Society has been necessary and appreciated. This has provided a solid basis for moving into the future.

The landscape in which we undertake our work is slowly changing. Research into ME/CFS is gradually increasing, the impact of chronic illness in general is being acknowledged, and international acceptance of ME/CFS as a real condition is greatly increased. It is up to Australia to catch up to the rest of the world and to ensure that those affected in our own country are not left behind when we see how this condition is understood, managed and treated.

The most immediate task for the Society is to improve how ME/CFS is understood and supported in Australia.

We will achieve this by building strong partnerships that will ensure that people affected by ME/CFS have access to a broad range of accessible and affordable programs that enhance their quality of life. And to ensure this, we need to build a financially sustainable and transparent organisation.

Objective 1:

Improve how ME/CFS is understood and supported

Objective 2:

Build strong partnerships

Objective 3:

Facilitate access to a broad range of accessible affordable programs to enhance quality of life

Objective 4:

Build a financially sustainable and transparent organisation



CEO Report

The 2014-15 year proved to be another year of evolution at Emerge Australia. With the 2014-17 Strategic Plan in place, a number of the planned projects commenced – and in some cases completed.

We updated our database and how our members' subscriptions are managed, undertook a comprehensive strategic review of how we communicate with our members, key stakeholders and the broader public. We took the big step to update and refresh our website and to improve the frequency and the depth of our communications on social media and by email. Our mailing list subscribers doubled during the year and the number of people visiting our website tripled. An improved tracking system enables us to more accurately identify who is visiting our website – ensuring we're reaching the people we want to reach.

With new operational systems and processes in place, our next major project was to launch our Health and Welfare Survey. This body of work is a research project facilitated in partnership with Federation University School of Health Sciences and Psychology. The survey required extensive planning and development, designed to quantify the level and type of need in the ME/CFS community. Once identified, Emerge Australia will be better equipped from July 2016, to advocate and inform medical, nursing and allied health providers, destigmatise ME/CFS in the community, motivate research and improve financial circumstances of people living with ME/CFS. This, in turn, will ensure greater understanding and acceptance of the condition and its impact on the lives of people affected, thereby reducing social isolation.

The Do Something for ME campaign was launched during ME/CFS Awareness Week in May 2015. It was a modest start, but the campaign brought us in touch with a number of bloggers and community activists that we haven't worked with in the past and with whom we are continuing to be engaged. We became the focus of a number of corporate community initiatives that broadened our reach and positively resulted in donations.

One of the most exciting developments was the funding of the Healthshare Fact Sheet project. This

is an initiative that we've been working on for over a year and thanks to the Gourlay Charitable Trust, we've finally been able to commence. This project will ensure that over 90% of GPs Australia-wide have access to a factsheet for their patients who have been newly diagnosed with ME/CFS.

It's been a busy year and without any doubt whatsoever, we would not have been able to achieve any of our successes without an incredible team of dedicated volunteers and supporters. Our members have risen to the challenge and despite the big ask, have helped us take a significant step forward in our advocacy work by participating in our Health and Welfare Survey. And our small, hard-working office team have been steady and productive and managed a lot with limited resources.

We are extremely grateful to the Department of Health and Human Services for their consistent financial support as well as to all of our individual and organisational financial donors. In this current challenging financial climate our small team in the office are so grateful of all the support that we've received from every single one of these generous souls. Ongoing funding for small not-for-profit organisations such as ours is an on-going issue and often a source of frustration however we remain focused on delivering high quality responsive services within our existing resources and capability.

Although 2014-15 has been a year of significant change, we remain optimistic and are looking forward to building on the work we've completed, continuing to work with and for the community of people in Australia affected by ME/CFS and related conditions.

Amanda Kelly
Former CEO





President's Report

For people with ME/CFS, their families and carers, it can be challenging to find good information about the condition and to connect with others in the same circumstances. A key highlight this year was the strengthening of our communications strategy enabling us to reach a much larger audience through our updated website, our e-bulletin and Facebook page. With the new website in place, it is now much easier to find good quality information about the condition and the latest news and research.

A very significant piece of work initiated this year was the Health and Welfare Survey undertaken in partnership with Federation University and supported by our skilled and dedicated volunteers. I would like to thank the 770 people who completed this lengthy survey – a significant effort for people who are very unwell. The survey will help us to build our case for support and provide a detailed picture of the profound ways in which ME/CFS affects people's health, welfare, income and quality of life.

Our outgoing CEO, Amanda Kelly, significantly strengthened our partnerships with a range of organisations. Our partnership work with cohealth facilitated health professional training to improve the understanding of ME/CFS and incorporate this into their health coaching program. Training and resources were also provided to Lifeline staff on ME/CFS, and we partnered with Eltham High School to pilot a school-based support program.

Given the size of our organisation and our limited funding, we have focused on strategic ways to support more people. This has included expanding our Peer Support Program, and training people from other services on working with people with ME/CFS.

With the receipt of a second year of funding from the Victorian Department of Human Services (now the Department of Health and Human Services) we were able to expand our peer support program. As a result of this program funding, five new peer led groups have been established and we have initiated a new program linking people together who are housebound providing them with friendship and support assisted by our peer support volunteer team. Not having the energy to go out of your door can make living with ME/CFS a lonely experience. Building the Peer Support Program has been an important strategy and by supporting the peer

leaders we have been able to support a larger number of people with ME/CFS.

Work has been undertaken this year to streamline administrative processes so that we are more efficient. The new website has enabled online membership renewals and donations. We anticipate that this will encourage more regular donations and that by making membership renewal easier, this will encourage retention of our members.

I would like to thank our outgoing CEO Amanda Kelly for all her work in support of the organisation. Amanda significantly improved the look and reputation of our organisation as well as strengthening partnerships with key organisations. Thank you also to the staff and volunteers of Emerge Australia – through your hard work, people with ME/CFS are informed and supported. Lastly I would like to thank the members of the committee and acknowledge Elizabeth Raut who resigned from the committee and her role as secretary in 2015.

We are fortunate to have a forward thinking, hard-working and skilled Committee of Management who put in many unpaid hours steering and supporting the organisation and advocating for more funds and better recognition for people with ME/CFS. We believe that change is in the air and that research breakthroughs and changes in attitude will come and look forward to continuing to support that journey.

Sally Missing
President





Treasurers Report

Treasurer's Report 30 June 2015

Emerge Australia has experienced difficult fiscal restraints in the 2014/15 financial year. The Committee of Management has undertaken a prudent strategic and operational review, implementing responsible financial measures which include a reduction of our human resource utilisation. Further ongoing strategies are required to keep the organisation in a positive position.



With the continued challenging financial climate, philanthropic funding has become increasingly difficult to source and, despite prudent measures to reduce costs, this has resulted in a financial loss this year.

We have continued to make every effort to secure funding from other sources to ensure we are in a more robust situation going forward, maintaining capacity to provide support and advocacy for our members. We acknowledge and thank all our supporters who assist our continued efforts to make a difference to the many lives affected by ME/CFS.

We acknowledge and thank Jill Byrne, our book keeper for her contributions across the 2014/15 financial year. A new auditor, Karla Eldridge & Associates was engaged this year. We thank Karla Eldridge and her business, for their support in preparing our audited 2014/15 financial statement, it is most appreciated.

Russell Smith MIPA; CTA

Highlights

Connect with ME

The Peer Support Program, now known as Connect with ME, continued to grow and diversify over the past year, providing three opportunities for people to connect; with someone one on one, by joining a support group or by starting up a new support group as a volunteer support group leader.

A total of 144 individuals approached Emerge Australia this year to participate in the Peer Support Group network. Growing demand for this program saw an additional five groups established, a 25% increase in the number of ME/CFS Peer Support Groups facilitated.

Our One-to-One program was developed to meet an identified gap for the needs of those with ME/CFS experiencing increased social isolation due to being house or bed bound. This program offers ways for people to interact with peers without leaving home, by matching interests and preferred mode of communication to make the best connections. Since the new program was launched, we have received 48 requests to participate, successfully pairing 24 individuals. A re-assessment of interests is undertaken for anyone not matched after six weeks to identify opportunities that could facilitate linking with another person awaiting a connection.



Highlights

Understanding Young People with ME/CFS Seminar

A seminar was hosted by Emerge Australia focusing on the needs of young people with ME/CFS. Dr Kathy Rowe, Paediatric Specialist at the Royal Children's Hospital, and Anne Keogh from Carers Victoria presented comprehensive and practical information to an audience of teachers, educators and young people who have ME/CFS and their families. A video recording of the program provided access to a larger audience who were unable to attend on the day, particularly those outside of the Melbourne area and interstate.



Health Professional Engagement

Through the generous support of the Gourlay Charitable Trust, up to 90% of General Practitioners have access to and can provide patients with a four-page ME/CFS fact sheet directly from within their clinical software package. This health promoting and self-care informational resource was developed in consultation with the Healthshare medical advisory board and our own independent medical advisors.

One hundred copies of the International Consensus Primer for Medical Practitioners (2012) were made available for dissemination through the support and donation of The Café Club ME/CFS Inner Melbourne & Outer East Social group. This document is the accepted standard for diagnosis and management of ME/CFS and through its dissemination aims to increase knowledge and understanding of ME/CFS amongst our medical fraternity.

Emerge Australia Health and Welfare Survey

Emerge Australia received an overwhelming response from 770 members of our community in the completion of a comprehensive Health and Welfare Survey. Results of data analysis in 2016, will equip Emerge Australia with the knowledge and understanding to inform the development of resources, education and advocacy programs for people who care for, work with, and people who have ME/CFS.

This project in partnership with Federation University School of Health Sciences and Psychology, aims to develop an understanding of the health and welfare of people affected by ME/CFS in Australia. This research seeks to investigate the impacts of ME/CFS on the education, employment and interpersonal interaction of people with the condition. The project also explores how people access healthcare and support services, and what helps or gets in the way of accessing those services.



2015 Awareness Week - Do Something for ME

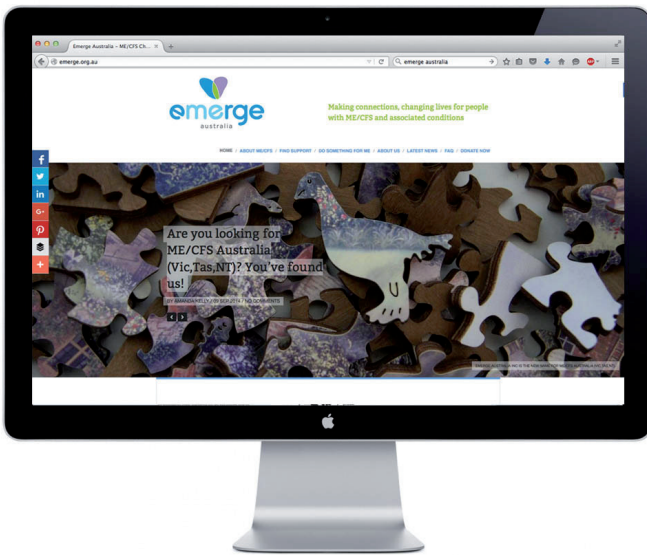
Awareness week this year activated an army of volunteers facilitating a myriad of events and activities which engaged broadly across the community, informing, educating and advocating on behalf of people with ME/CFS under the theme Do Something for ME. Community displays, morning teas, workshops, wearing blue, blogs and webinars are just a few examples of the level of enthusiasm and activism volunteers demonstrated for the cause.



Highlights

Emerge Australia Communications

In November 2014, Emerge Australia launched its new website as an adjunct to the society's new name, logo and branding activities. The new website development included a complete content review, evidence base and source referencing. A 193% increase of users to our website was evident by June 2015.



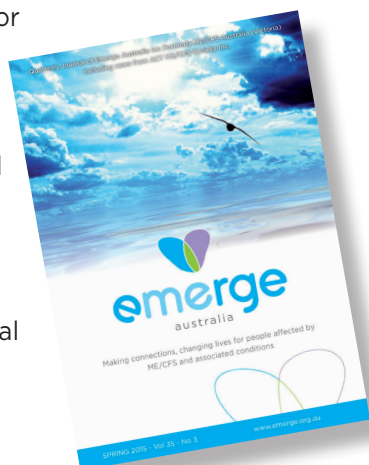
24,258 copies of the monthly Emerge eBulletin were distributed across the year to a total of 2646 recipients, a 65.9% increase of recipients from last year.

The Emerge Australia Facebook page facilitates access to ME/CFS informational posts and links back to our website latest news articles. Our page is followed by 2,595 individuals or groups and has received 27,200 likes across the year.

The Information@emerge.org.au email address received 459 requests for advice or support.

This information line is responded to by our small team of dedicated volunteers across the year.

3687 copies of the quarterly Emerge Journal were delivered to our members.



Health Coaching for ME/CFS

Emerge Australia has partnered with cohealth Footscray, a leading community health organisation, to offer people in the area the opportunity to participate in their Living Well Program. cohealth's Living Well Program encourages people with chronic illnesses to develop self-management techniques through the support of one-on-one health coaching. The Health Coaches received comprehensive training on ME/CFS by Emerge Australia, and aim to work together with people on their health goals and provide linkages to other services where possible.



Balance Sheet - Emerge Australia Inc.

	As at 30 June 2014	As at June 2015
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank	\$112,605	\$89,708
Accounts Receivable	\$1,621	\$484
Cash on Hand	\$250	\$283
Stock on Hand	\$4,735	\$1,989
Total Current Assets	\$119,211	\$92,464
Total Fixed Assets	\$11,657	\$8,550
Total Assets	\$130,868	\$101,015
Liabilities and shareholder's equity		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$3,939	\$1,711
Income in Advance	\$53,140	\$48,083
Other Current Liabilities	\$10,501	\$7,819
Total Current Liabilities	\$67,580	\$57,614
Shareholder's equity		
Retained Earnings	\$95,199	\$63,288
Net Income	(\$31,911)	(\$19,887)
Total Shareholder's Equity	\$63,288	\$43,401
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$130,868	\$101,015

Profit and Loss - Emerge Australia Inc.

	As at 30 June 2014	As at June 2015
Income		
Sales	\$12,283	\$8,603
Government Grants	\$43,028	\$110,673
One-off Grants	\$62,418	\$19,500
Membership	\$19,829	\$15,544
Gifts and Donations	\$76,114	\$52,127
Interest	\$2,452	\$1,695
Fundraising	\$13,180	\$4,805
Other Income	\$16,069	\$47
Total Income	\$245,373	\$230,996
Gross Profit	\$245,373	\$230,996
Expenses		
Accommodation	\$33,259	\$23,720
Facilities and Equipment	\$7,346	\$3,815
Staffing Costs	\$186,619	\$182,224
Communication	\$9,505	\$12,943
Emerge Costs	\$17,180	\$14,240
Administration	\$13,752	\$11,159
Program Costs	\$9,623	\$1,924
Total Expenses	\$277,284	\$250,883
Net Earnings	(\$31,911)	(\$19,887)

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF EMERGE AUSTRALIA INC

Scope

I certify that I have audited the attached financial statements of Emerge Australia Inc. for the period ended 30 June 2015, consisting of statement of financial position and notes to and forming part of the financial accounts.

The Organisation's Committee of Management is responsible for the financial statements and I have determined that the accounting policies used are appropriate to meet the requirements of the members. I have conducted an independent audit of these financial statements in order to express an opinion to the members of the organisation.

The financial report has been prepared for the distribution to members for the purpose of fulfilling the Committee's financial reporting requirements under its constitution. I disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates to any person other than a member, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

My Audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance as to whether the financial statements are free of material mis-statement. My procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures on the financial statements. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether, in all material respects, the financial statements, are presently fairly in accordance with applicable Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements, so as to present a view which is consistent without understanding of the Organisation's financial position and the results of its operations.

Audit Opinion

The audit opinion expressed has been formed on the above basis.

In my opinion, the financial statements of Emerge Australia Inc. are drawn up:

- a) So as to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Organisation as at 30 June 2015 and of the results of its operations for the period ended 30 June 2015
- b) In accordance with applicable Accounting Standards; and
- c) In accordance with the provision of the Association Incorporation Act.



Signature of Auditor

16/10/2015

Date

Name of Auditor:	Karla Lee Eldridge
Professional Membership:	B.Bus MIPA 216588
Firm:	KARLA ELDRIDGE AND ASSOCIATES PTY LTD
Address:	Unit 4/458 Middleborough Rd Blackburn Vic 3130
Phone:	(03) 9898 3800

Donors, Bequesters and Volunteers and Support Group Leaders

Major Donors

We acknowledge the ongoing support provided by the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services, and would like to sincerely thank those individuals and organisations who have made financial contributions to support the organisation in the past 12 months.

Generous contributions have been greatly received from the following:

Gourlay Charitable Trust
Harper Bernays Charitable Trust
The Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
The Marian and E.H Flack Trust
The Marion R Stobo Endowment
The Sir Wilfred Brookes Charitable Trust
The Sir William Angliss (Victoris) Charitable Fund

Community Donors

Robert J Tierney
Daniel Trewin
Scotsglen Singers
Clare Marantelli
Blackmores LTD Staff Community Chest
Judith Overbeek
Sue Chase
Pam Stone
ME/CFS Society of ACT
Henwood Park Football Club
Redback Conferencing
Edie Robertson
Dorothy Hale
Alexander A Johnson
Build Technics Commercial Builders
Karen Anne Maloney
Givematcher
VMIA
Jocelyn Cairns
Grill'd
Richard Muirden
Ritchies / IGA Supermarkets
Aussie Farmers Direct
Everyday Hero members and participants
Our members and supporters
Awareness Week participants

Volunteers

A total of 31 generous individuals provided over 1900 hours of volunteer service and support toward the operations of Emerge Australia over the past 12 months. Their dedicated roles include;

Administration Support

Carol Saynor & Angie Szmorag

Communications Assistant

Danielle Klein & Salam Hasanein

Community Engagement Team Leader

Jessica Morris

Committee of Management

Sally Missing, Andrew Bretherton, Elizabeth Raut, Russell Smith, Kath Ferry, Irene Herceg, Nola Miles and Astrid Sweres

Connect with ME Facilitator

Lee Fisher

Editor (Emerge Journal)

Lucy Nijam & Angus Tonkin

Events Support

Carol Owen, Dale Rebgetz & Jan Rebgetz

Home Visit Facilitator

Jane Berman

Information Line

Sheryl Findlay, Irene Herceg, Kristina Hone, John Lombardo, Tania Ratneyake, Anna Murphy, Charlotte Williamson & Kurtis Young, Chenhong Xu

Library Project

Nicala Davis & Claire Hughes

Online Editor

Tara Calaby

Researcher

Nanette Gerlach & Cara Busst

Research Assistants

Anna Murphy & Charlotte Williamson

Self-Management Course Facilitator

Claire Huntley & Richard Johnson

Volunteer Coordinator

Nicola Reiss

Website Technical Editor

David Price

Donors, Bequesters and Volunteers and Support Group Leaders



Support Group Leaders

Lois Bakic	Albury/Wodonga CFS Support Group (Glenroy NSW)
Jane Berman	Cafe Club ME/CFS - Inner Melbourne Social Group and Outer East Social Group
Thalia Castles	Bentleigh-Bayside ME/CFS Support Group (Bentleigh East)
Lucy Corrigan	Hobart Support Group
Georgina Dodson	Shepparton ME/CFS/FM/Lupus Support Group
Helen Gillett	Sale ME/CFS Support Group
Paula Hillgrove	Mulgrave ME/CFS Support Group
Jan Hiscock	Cafe Support Group for CFS and Fibromyalgia
Gabriele Kearle	Hobart ME/CFS/FM Cafe Social Group
Danielle Kline	ME in Mildura
Deena Lane	Laurieton Support Group
Kitty Lobert	St Kilda ME/CFS Support Group

Peter McKinnon	Inner West (Sydney) ME/CFS & FM Support Group (Marrickville)
Stephen Mellor	North-West All Rounders Support Group
Victor Rolfe	Frankston FMS/ME/CFS Self-help Group
Laura Russo	North East ME/CFS Group
Rosemary Smith	Café Club Eastern Suburbs ME/CFS Support Group
Sheryl Somerville	Geelong ME/CFS Support Group
Bronwyn Sonter	Tweed Heads Support Group
Winsome Stephenson	Wollongong ME/CFS/FM (Also MCS) Support Group
Winsome Stephenson	Wollongong ME/CFS/FM Support Group (Wollongong, Thirroul, Kiama)
Annette Stewart	Richmond ME/CFS Cafe Social (Over 40s)
Joy Wood	Inner North ME/CFS Cafe Club
Jessica Wynne	Bendigo CFS/ME/FM/Lyme Support Group





Membership & Information: ☎ 03 9529 1344

Call and leave a message at any time, and we will call you back.

*free call back to anywhere in Australia

Emerge Australia

(formerly ME/CFS Australia (VicTasNT))

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www.emerge.org.au