

Message from the President

Hello everyone! Already time for our Autumn Newsletter and how busy CAB has been since I last spoke to you. As you know we opened for 2021 in mid-January and then had a short lockdown during the first week of February, but staff were still able to assist a lot of clients and the disruption to our service was minimal.

I am sure all the Branches will be interested to know that the Board has signed off on all the collated and amended Branch Bylaws. So we now have an up-to-date document which I hope is clear and workable for you all. My thanks to the Branch Bylaws Working Party for their hard work in bringing the comments, suggestions and amendments together.

The Board is also happy to continue the payment of an Honorarium to all the Coordinators as an acknowledgement of their hard work. We agreed, with pleasure, to formalise the Honoraria paid to Treasurers and to extend to the Secretaries of all the Branches a similar amount. We know and understand the hard work you all put into the community service that CAB offers and we are decidedly proud of our volunteers.

Stacey Price, one of our solicitors at CAB, has been with us for one year and during this time all of her work has



been supervised by the Principal Legal Officer. Stacey will finish her time for supervised practice on April 19th, thus completing the remainder of her required relevant experience in the practice of law since her admittance at the Supreme Court WA.

Anne Davies has joined the staff as the Compiling Officer and assists the Legal department in compiling, archiving and organising files. We welcome her and also 5 new volunteers who have joined us since January.

Public awareness of our organisation is increasing with over 3,000 people accessing our website monthly. We have over 800 followers on twitter which means our reach is expanding and there is a message out there connecting us to others. The regular Curtin Radio 100.1 FM segment, with

callers speaking to our CEO and to the Principal Legal Officer, always stirs interest in CAB and is a great disseminator of information.

Do keep talking about CAB and our Mission and Vision to all and sundry and we will be able to continue to expand the numbers in the community whom we can help, advise and inform. My best wishes to you all, have a happy Easter break and return refreshed and invigorated.

Kind regards,

Wendy Stephens
President
Board of Management

Message from the CEO

Hello and welcome to our second online autumn newsletter. It's also the first anniversary of our online newsletter, which is very exciting. Since this time last year the world has changed enormously and at CAB we have been adapting to encompass those changes and to make things a little bit easier for the community to access our services.

With this in mind, I'd like to acknowledge the wonderful response from staff and volunteers to the February lockdown. I'd like to thank you all for being so adaptable during this time and for willingly returning to the office, even though most branches had to wear masks for a week. We couldn't run CAB without you, so thank you so much. I'd also like to especially thank Garry for getting the Perth office set up so staff could work from home



again during that week. You raced into the office on the Sunday afternoon and set up what was needed so that we could still provide a great service to the community.

During that week staff provided an extensive service to the community via on-line services and over the telephone. In addition, during the month of February our website had a user increase of 200%. So we are certainly getting information out to the community even when we are all at home keeping safe!

We've gone back to our safety plans prior to the lockdown – this means contact tracing is still in place with the only change being that the SafeWA QR codes are now mandatory. Each branch has a supply of masks in the office just in case but hopefully we won't have to wear them again.

The Legal Aid Virtual Office has started operating in Fremantle, Rockingham, Kwinana and Busselton. This means that all branches except Perth and

Bunbury have the virtual office program running from them. Thanks to all of the volunteers who have willingly participated in the training run by Legal Aid and who are ensuring Legal Aid clients receive a warm CAB welcome when attending their appointments. I know that Legal Aid is extremely grateful for the service you provide and for the way you have embraced this service. It's just one more way that CAB volunteers help the community.

As you might know, CAB runs a Client Satisfaction Survey that's provided at the end of appointments and on our website. We track the results to see if there are any areas in which we can change or improve. Currently 94% of all clients have given CAB a 100% rating for the services they have received. This is a great reflection on the services provided and also on our excellent customer service and ability to help people with information and referral.

Many organisations throughout Australia have lost a large number of their volunteers due to COVID-19 and are finding it difficult to run programs as a result. This is extremely worrying. Recently Volunteering Australia released a report into volunteering and the impact COVID-19 has had on volunteering. [The link is here if you're interested.](#)

We understand there are many reasons why people choose to resign from volunteering but these numbers and the impact on the community is alarming.

Conversely though, at CAB, we have had an almost 100% re-engagement of volunteers and in fact have a long waiting list of people wanting to volunteer for us. This is pretty amazing and is a reflection of our great name in the community and the value placed on the work they do by our volunteers. CAB volunteers are as diverse as our client base and the tasks they perform and the services they provide are extensive. Without our volunteers we would be lost and such dedication is incredible. No wonder we love our volunteers so much!!

Take care and stay safe.

Kathryn

Staff Profile - Natalia Moorin

Natalia has been the Executive Assistant at CAB for nearly a year now, and a volunteer before that. We sat down with her recently to ask her a few questions about her time at CAB.

Natalia, you started as a volunteer, how did you find out about CAB and what grabbed your interest?

Natalia: I originally found out about CAB through my disability disability employment services provider at the end of 2019. I was applying for a variety of jobs at the time and wasn't hearing anything back from them, so I was advised to start applying for volunteer positions to build up my experience. I had a quick look through the ads on Seek, and an Information and Referral Officer ad popped up, and I figured I would give applying a shot!



I didn't know anything about CAB at the time, but the wording of the ad focused on assisting clients and being able to provide a service to people – which felt like something I would enjoy doing.

How has your role evolved from being a volunteer to being employed casually and now part-time?

Natalia: Originally I started as a volunteer in January 2020, and did some administrative work for Elena with the volunteer database and health and safety procedures. I was also given the job of developing the newsletter and sending questions to other volunteers to be featured. Kathryn offered me a casual position in March 2020 after seeing me utilise my HR skills throughout my volunteering. But on my first week, we were all sent into lockdown.

Since March, I worked on more administrative tasks – adjusting funding grants to meet COVID-19 restrictions, developing Health & Safety procedures, organising the National

Volunteer Week newsletter and other things that expanded my work and skillsets. In July my position was made part-time which then expanded my role again. Now my role looks much more comprehensive from when I started at CAB.

What does the Executive Assistant actually do? What would a typical day at work look like for you?

Natalia: This is tricky because I often feel like there isn't a typical day at work for me – it changes so much depending on what is due. Generally, I come in and start the day with a chai and check over my emails first thing. Then I write down any things I've been requested to do from my emails – sometimes it's reviewing or developing documents, updating the volunteer databases, or other things that I need to respond to.

Then I'll have a look at the pile of things to do on my desk. At the moment there's six to eight tasks that need doing, varying in size and priority. I'll start plugging away at whatever is most urgent or will take a short amount of time to do, and respond to things as they come in. Sometimes, I'll be asked to help out with reception, or I'll be given a new task that needs doing quickly, so my workflow has to be pretty fluid.

You have such a broad set of skills and can do pretty much anything that is being asked of you, what do you enjoy the most? Do you have an area of interest?

Natalia: For me, I just enjoy helping people, in any way that I can. That's my primary motivator, but there are

other things I enjoy too. One of the things that I am passionate about is Health & Safety. I've put a lot of work and time into developing good health & safety practices for CAB and it's good to see those be implemented and accepted across all of the branches. I kind of picked that up from an HR course I did in 2019, and it's stuck with me as one of the things I can really improve and be involved in. I was going to take a Cert IV in Work Health & Safety in 2019 before choosing HR, so it's been an interest for me for some time.

Another task I enjoy at CAB is developing the newsletters! In my opinion, it's good to hear from a wide variety of branches and what they are doing, and to strengthen communication between volunteers. Getting people's responses to questions and looking for events that might resonate with people is something I enjoy. When the newsletter gets sent out it is a bit scary, especially if something I think would appeal to people doesn't, but writing the newsletter helps me keep up my design and communication skills.

You were recently invited to speak at TheMHS Youth Roundtable, what did that involve?

Natalia: I've been involved with the Youth Mental Health Sub Network under the Mental Health Commission for about 6 months now as a Youth Voice Representative. Part of that role is providing feedback about mental health service delivery, and what modifications need to be made in WA. As part of that, we helped organize The Mental Health Services (TheMHS) Youth

Roundtable in collaboration with the Youth Affairs Council WA (YACWA). As part of the Roundtable, I was nominated to speak about LGBTQIA+ issues in the mental health care system.

I spoke about my lived experience of mental illness and seeking help from family, friends, and mental health care services such as psychologists and counselors. I also spoke about what should be changed to ensure that these services are effective and helping the most people possible. The conference was held virtually the week after lockdown in Perth, and it was a good panel – everyone was supportive, and my fellow panelists were very eloquent and had excellent points to bring up. It was a really positive, if very stressful, experience!

You are currently juggling working at CAB part-time and studying. What do you study and what else do you do outside of CAB?

Natalia: I study Human Resource Management and Business Law which builds off of the Cert IV and Diploma that I have previously done. So far, I'm enjoying it but I'm only in my second semester, and I'm studying part time, so it'll be quite some time before I finish. I'm hoping that combined with what I do at CAB, it'll reinforce what I've been taught.

Outside of CAB I honestly don't do much! I bake sometimes, and I'll bring it into the office too – I make a very good chocolate zucchini cake 😊. I also learn Russian in my spare time, but I haven't kept up with it as fervently as of late. Most of my spare time is spent

playing video games, or relaxing with my partner and his adorable cats... or both at once ☺.



CAB Busselton volunteers celebrating Christmas and the end of 2020!

Volunteer Highlight

Deborah has been a volunteer at the Mandurah branch for 5 years now and has recently stepped into the role of Branch Co-coordinator. We asked her a few questions to better get to know her.

You've been with us for some time Deborah, how did you hear about CAB and what made you want to volunteer?

Deborah: I first heard of CAB in New Zealand quite a few years ago. A friend of mine, Colleen, and her husband retired to NZ and Colleen took over the running of the Kerikeri branch in the Bay of Islands. I visited her for a significant birthday and she explained her role and consciously or unconsciously 'planted the seed' for my

involvement a decade or so later, soon after my retirement. Colleen and I had been colleagues in Darwin for many years – she as a Librarian and me as a Research Assistant – sourcing and sharing information was in our blood!

What did you do prior to volunteering at CAB?

Deborah: Prior to retiring and volunteering at CAB, I had been a program manager for the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This involved leading a small team in the creation and analysis of population estimates and projections. I also wrote feature articles for various ABS publications. Initially upon retirement I undertook some consultancy work with one of the state government departments. I have had previous careers as a peripheral academic and as a teacher. I started volunteering at Mandurah CAB in 2015.

Until last year I frequently travelled overseas, both as a tourist and a volunteer. I continue to support two NGOs in Cambodia with data analysis, report writing and funding applications.

A couple of years back I spent a fascinating few months in Europe; highlights included walking (part of) the Camino in Spain/Portugal, cycling in Austria and a stint helping to run a 400 year old B&B in the New Forest in England. This 'Thatched Cottage Hotel' is only a few kilometres from the family home my parents, brother and I migrated from to Australia when I was a child.

What made you want to share the role of coordinator with Frances?



Deborah: Frances invited me to share the coordinator role last year and we agree that together we will achieve more than either of us would be able to individually. I am particularly keen that CAB services become better known and more widely used by the community and to promote our brand as a referral and advisory service of high degree.

Sometimes the coordinator role is quite a busy one and we can cover for each other during absences. Frances is taking some time out just now so I am 'flying solo' for my first few months – thankfully she is still available for me to call on, and other volunteers are being very supportive.

CAB branches have different demographics and the type of queries tend to vary from one office to another. What types of matters do you assist with the most at the Mandurah branch?

Deborah: People come to the Mandurah branch for help with the full range of issues affecting them in their day-to-day lives. Increasingly, this includes the need for support to access

information and services that are online, to navigate digital processes, and to find a way forward when going on the internet is not something they want to or feel able to do.

Mandurah has a higher median age than most metro- and regional communities in Western Australia. The number of requests for information/forms relating to Powers of Attorney and Guardianship reflects this, as does the range of queries we receive about aged care services and will preparation. Consumer issues, dividing fences and over-hanging tree challenges are other frequent areas of concern our clients may ask about.

Our Branch also gives clerical support at the Magistrates and Children's courts – this assistance enables the duty lawyers to spend as much time as possible with their clients; and affords us an insight to the younger demographic in our City. We also host a 'Virtual' Legal Aid service in our office once a week. With regard to visitation, Fridays are typically the busiest day of our week as we host the, much sought, services of a Justice of the Peace on this day.

Why do you volunteer for CAB?

Deborah: *"I volunteer because we live in a complex world which some people find difficult to navigate. Being able to help others tackle issues they are facing, and providing them with information which will help them feel in control of their own lives, is incredibly rewarding. I also love doing the research..."*

I borrowed this paragraph from a CAB NZ volunteer – it articulates my truth eloquently.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Deborah: I moved to Mandurah, from Perth in 2014 and love it here. I live in a small cottage adjacent to the Estuary with Hugo, my 'pandemic poodle puppy'. I have two adult daughters in Perth, both happily married and successful in their chosen careers – happily for me, we all get on well and see each other often.

I am a 'water person' – I love being in or on the river, sea and swimming pools. I sail regularly, both socially and competitively, kayak, swim and do aqua aerobics. On land, I enjoy gardening, I cycle and walk so generally maintain a fairly active lifestyle. I enjoy film and theatre; dining out and reading. I have a piano which I mean to learn to play 'in retirement' – maybe this winter, perhaps after I've culled the contents of my wardrobe!

Volunteer Highlight

Martha has been a volunteer with CAB for a year now, and took on the role of Branch Coordinator of Midland in December last year. We asked her some questions about her experience so far.

How did you hear about CAB? What made you want to volunteer here?



Martha: I knew I wanted to start to do some volunteer work in January 2020. I searched on the Volunteering WA website and came across an ad looking for Information and Referral Officer for CAB Midland. I straight away thought, this is something I would like to do. I had never heard of CAB before. But the organization appealed to me immediately.

What did you do prior to volunteering at CAB?

Martha: I am a business owner - earthmoving and construction company - and I was responsible for HR and admin duties and tender writing. I also study French.

What lead you to assuming the role of the Branch Coordinator at Midland?

Martha: A new challenge and an opportunity to further my skills. I also really enjoy our branch. We have got great volunteers; it is inspiring to be part of a team.

I am learning so much all the time. That is always a good thing. To try and better yourself, I think.

What types of queries do you get the most at the Midland office?

Martha: I would have to say Will. EPA, EPG and LOA enquiries. Followed by family law.

What was the most unusual query you ever got?

Martha: My colleague answered this call, it was about a lady that wanted to proceed legal action against a friend who was looking after her pet bird, a parrot, while she was away and now did not want to return the bird.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Martha: I enjoy exercising; box-fit, yoga, strength, beach walks and in winter bush walks. To "hang out" with my teenage sons, whenever they let me.

I love to travel overseas, I am from the Netherlands, but that is not possible right now of course. Now I go to the Southwest when I can. I am in love with Yallingup.

I study for a Diploma in Family Dispute Resolution. I like to go out for a bite to eat and have a few drinks with friends and see a movie or a performance. There are so many great (cultural) events going on in Perth, I wish I had more time!



Julie and Chris celebrating victory after taking some lovely photos of CAB Joondalup for our website (coming soon!).



We've analysed the results of recent volunteer satisfaction surveys, and the results might just surprise you!

Of our respondents...



95% of respondents said they were likely to recommend CAB as a place to volunteer.

100% of respondents said the volunteer work was meaningful to them.



97.5% of respondents felt safe while volunteering at CAB.

94.8% of respondents felt satisfied with CAB and their volunteering role.



82.5% of respondents said that they were receiving appropriate ongoing training and support.



We've analysed the results of recent volunteer satisfaction surveys, and the results might just surprise you!

Of our respondents...

91.9% of respondents were happy with their relationships with other volunteers.



100% of respondents were happy with their relationship with their Branch Coordinator.

86.1% of respondents were happy overall with the public and CAB clients.



94.4% of respondents were happy with their overall working environment.

81.6% of respondents felt that they were fully integrated into CAB.



CAB News

WA has come out of lockdown at the start of February, and as a result, CAB is back to the limitations of the COVID-19 Stage 4 Safety Plans. Masks are no longer required, but we still must ensure that clients [complete the contact register](#) when accessing CAB services, in addition to our use of hand sanitiser, social distancing, and wiping down surfaces with disinfectant wipes. If you are unsure about the requirements of these plans, the information can be found on our Branch Intranet.

The Legal Aid Virtual Office has opened up in four more branches of CAB, in our Busselton, Fremantle, Kwinana and Rockingham branches. These have been up and running for a little while now, and we'd really like to thank the volunteers at these branches for being on board with learning about and facilitating this new service, as well as Legal Aid itself for letting CAB house these services. Thanks to all these volunteers for your hard work!

[An article was written recently](#) about the Armadale office facilitating Legal Aid Virtual Office appointments as well as the new Virtual Office locations. Thank you, Kerrie Schilling and Armadale volunteers Sonia and Julie for being photographed for the article!

Opal from the Fremantle branch would like to note that they've had many clients come in for the Legal Aid Virtual Office since it started operation. They have also sent flyers to many organisations in their areas to advertise these new services.

The brief lockdown hasn't affected our training schedule too much, as we had our first training sessions a few weeks ago for the Metropolitan branches, with Legal Refresher Training occurring at all branches over the past few months. We will be recording a session of the Customer Service, Information and Referral and Health & Safety sessions soon - so if you ever want to have something to refer to - watch this space!

Staff Profile – Anne Davies

Anne has been a volunteer with CAB for 2.5 years now, and has recently been employed casually as the Compiling Officer. We interviewed her about these changes and her role at CAB.

How did you hear about CAB? What made you want to volunteer here?

Anne: I had some contact with CAB in the Albany Office some years ago and they were most helpful. When applying for jobs upon my return to Perth I felt my admin experience could be of some use.

What did you do prior to volunteering at CAB?

Anne: I had enrolled and gained my Certificate IV in Legal Studies and other training options to enhance my job prospects.

Can you describe how your day usually looks like when you're at CAB?

Anne: It starts with an early cup of coffee, and thereafter is busy all day,



non-stop. I usually start by attending to the processing of documents to be posted to our clients.

I then move on to compiling documents, filing, attending to archiving which causes me to spend some alone time in the vault with kitchen facilities as a rescue assist.

Ready to attend to other duties as requested, I sometimes plead with the office copy machine for quicker response times.

In your role, you collaborate with a few different people. How does your work lead to documents being completed? What is the process of compiling documents?

Anne: This part of my job requires a high level of concentration and where my hearing loss is overshadowed by my ability to focus on the written information.

Although not without some human failings, I mostly observe and confirm the accuracy of the recorded information prior to compiling the documents for our clients. Any noticed corrections are handled by my supervisor, Ms Judy Fetherston, and

again scrutinised before being returned to the lawyer for the final check.

I will then process the validated documents and either post these documents to the client, the relevant branches or pass Perth office appointments on to Judy for a phone call, whereupon the clients can pick their documents up from our Perth office.

I am also called upon to photocopy initial contact documents for the purpose of making up new files. These are currently handled by our volunteer, Janet Harding, and if required, I am happy to jump in and make up new files as well.

Actually, I am very happy to help wherever needed.

Have you experienced any challenges in your volunteer role that would make a good story?

Anne: Sometimes, when there is a lack of space due to meetings in the Board Room happening, I struggle with getting access to the programs I use for the compiling of documents.

But beyond that, I have nothing as a volunteer as yet that will make for a good story.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Anne: I love to read, renovate and restructure houses.

Autumn Special Days & Events

There are a plethora of special days and weeks commemorating and celebrating different types of people and causes all across the year. These often accompany a variety of events as well, so keep your eyes out for things happening in the community.

- March 15th - 21st - [Harmony Week](#) is a week-long series of events to celebrate the multicultural nature of Australia through inclusivity and diversity. This week culminates in Harmony Day, on March 21st where people are encouraged to wear orange to support open communication and mutual respect.
- March 18th - [Close the Gap Day](#)

is a day that encourages awareness of the health and life expectancy gaps between Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Australians and non-Indigenous Australians. The campaign aims to close the gap in these areas by 2030.

- March 22nd - 26th - [Advance Care Planning Week](#) is an awareness week about planning for future health care decisions when you are unable to make those decisions at the time. They encourage everyone to have those conversations before they become necessary in order to reduce stress and anxiety when in those situations.
- May 17th - 23rd - [National Volunteer Week](#) is a week designed to celebrate the commitment and contributions of volunteers to all aspects of Australian life. The theme this year is 'Recognise. Reconnect. Reimagine.' to tie into the



Kerrie Schilling, Armadale Branch Coordinator is pictured alongside Armadale Branch Volunteers enjoying their Christmas get-together.

immense work volunteers did during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns.

- May 19th - 25th - [Law Week](#) is a series of events organised by the Law Society of WA in order to promote access to justice for all and inform the community about the legal system in Western Australia.

Events

There are a large number of events coming up this quarter, for fundraising, awareness, professional development and even networking. Check some of these events out below!

- March 23rd - May 29th - The [UWA Course for Accreditation as a National Mediator \(NMAS\)](#) runs over a ten-week period, with sessions nightly each Tuesday, plus a coaching and assessment day for those who don't have time for a 5-day intensive course. Once completed, participants are able to be registered as a Nationally Accredited Mediator.
- March 27th - The [Community Movie Nights on the Lawn](#) event is sponsored by the Community Bank of Busselton & Dunsborough and feature light activities and entertainment before showing a family-friendly movie to the audience. This is just one of many future movie nights for 2021.
- April 1st - [Inglewood Crafternoons: Book Binding 1](#) is an event organised by the City of Stirling to teach adults how to bind books! There are five sessions organised in April, each Thursday, so check out all of them if you're interested.

- April 10th - [Cockburn Cultural Fair](#) is an event organised by the City of Cockburn to celebrate cultural differences within the community, including excellent music and delicious food.
- May 4th - [De-escalating Conflict and Aggression](#) is a course run by Evolve Events that provides tools for people to prevent situations from escalating and gives attendees the tools to mitigate aggressive or unexpected behaviours.



CAB Joondalup volunteers are shown here enjoying their Christmas party at the end of 2020 with some lovely food.

If you know anyone who is interested in volunteering at CAB, please tell them about the [Expression of Interest form](#) on our website.