

Chief Executive's Report

Response to Covid-19 Pandemic

May 2020

The Caladenia Team responded instantly and appropriately to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The situation changed so rapidly from March 10 to March 18, but Caladenia had new policies and procedures in place for each escalation.

Caladenia's part time WHS officer was required to work almost full time in the first weeks of the pandemic, writing new infection control policies and procedures, sourcing hand sanitiser and setting up sanitising stations at the entry ways to Caladenia, and briefing staff on new handwashing procedures and techniques for assisting our members in the most appropriate and safe way.

The WHS officer and the CEO monitored the situation and conferred over the weekend, and by Monday March 16th a decision had been made to cancel all community based outings. Elaborate plans were made to ferry those people into the centre for programs, but as the situation changed again, Caladenia responded by ceasing face-to-face programs on Wednesday March 18th at 4:30pm. Both the State and Commonwealth Departments were emailed to let them know.

The Department of Health made the call to cease face to face social support early the following week, but by then most programs had ceased to operate.

Caladenia's CEO was in constant contact with the managers of the other social support programs in her network. Caladenia was a "first responder" reaching out to the other managers and checking in each day to make sure all managers were responding in a similar manner.

All email addresses for clients, carers, staff, volunteers and board were collected and collated and a Mailchimp mailing list was started. This has been worth the time it took to set up, and is working well as a mass communication tool. Staff have also been sending out a joke of the day video, and emailing activity sheets to those who are able to receive them that way.

The Staff Team worked on various tasks while the Leadership Team planned the best way to still provide a service to our members and carers. The building was cleaned, the cobwebs done, the buses washed and sanitised. I have cancelled our contract cleaners and a staff member will do the reduced amount of cleaning required for the duration. The staff worked on phone calls to carers, members and volunteers – checking on their welfare, their access to shopping and meals, and offering support with deliveries of food or groceries. There were not many people who did not have a good support system. Once Leanne had formulated a clear spreadsheet outlining individual client and carer needs and wishes, Staff are now ringing either daily (one or two very isolated members) weekly, fortnightly or less often (as per carer's wishes) to 1. Ascertain they are still coping at home and 2. To talk to members to give the carers a break for ½ an hour.

It was realised early on that Caladenia's 50 volunteers are also at risk of becoming isolated. Many of them are in their 70's and 80's, with 2 in their 90's. A Facebook page was quickly set up for the volunteers and they were emailed an invitation to join. It quickly became a place to

share puzzles and Jokes, and staff are trying to keep the page interactive by responding to comments and posting new content. It has now expanded to "Volunteers and Friends" as people continue to join. There are currently over 50 members.

Staff have also been calling volunteers to see if they needed anything, and also just to give them someone else to talk to during this time of self isolation. Volunteers have appreciated the contact, and many have offered to assist us if we have a job for them.

For those who do not have email or Facebook we have posted out various newsletters, and will continue to do this.

Caladenia's very first Zoom program was organised by staff in early April, and 5 members attended with their family member's assistance. Since then there have been three groups of 4 clients who meet weekly over zoom. This week new programs will be trialled, introducing whiteboard activities and bingo. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Staff intend to teach carers who may have the technology but not the knowhow to access some socialisation via Zoom.

The Zoom programs will extend to include other Program Leaders, and a wider range of members moving forward. Staff are also working on developing a DVD for those families who do not have access to the internet.

Temporary Covid-19 Care plans have been developed for each Caladenia client, detailing the supports that each individual requires throughout the pandemic. Clients are being monitored regularly and care plans updated if there is a need.

Activity Packs that include word games, jokes, song lyrics and puzzles have been made available on our website for anyone to utilise – not just Caladenia Clients. These resources are available at www.caladenia.com.au.

Caladenia has built a YouTube channel that has over 30 videos including Joke of the Day and other amusing short clips. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBwG9-2y_EIFg3ZVX_pLu_g

The Eastern Sector Development team held its first Zoom meeting with 45 people attending. Caladenia's CEO was asked to speak to the group about some of the innovative things we had done so far to deliver services differently. Caladenia was asked to contribute to a short video detailing the innovative and immediate response to the Pandemic. <https://youtu.be/gNmPn7nA8Fo>

On Friday March 20th Caladenia responded to an email request from Eastern Volunteers. They have a client base of 1300 frail aged and isolated clients who all needed to be called to ascertain their preparedness for staying home, and what they would do if they or a family member became ill. Caladenia staff are now completing Covid-19 Care Plans for each client contacted and will then proceed to assist with welfare calls and assistance with shopping or medication deliveries if needed.

It was agreed that Caladenia would work in partnership with Eastern Volunteers, all the Caladenia staff have completed a "temporary volunteer registration" and provided police check details to enable them to work through these phone calls from home on the days they are rostered to work. All staff have completed a "Work from home risk assessment form" and have sent in photo evidence of suitable working arrangements. This partnership is an incredibly

positive outcome of such challenging times.

Caladenia will continue to operate as we are, utilising the funding that has already been paid to us by the Department. There has been a clear directive from the Department now that asks all CHSP funded services to continue to support their registered clients in any creative and innovative non-face-to-face manner. Any supports, welfare checks or shopping that are undertaken will reduce the load on the healthcare system. The Department have also advised funding will not be recouped if targets are not met this financial year. We do however still have to record all activities and report them as usual through DEX.

Caladenia is closely monitoring advice from the DOH, as well as service specific directives daily, rest assured that Caladenia will be ready to change practices again if the situation requires.

Since the Leadership Team was split early on to minimise the potential spread of infection, staff have found it challenging not working face to face with the rest of the Leadership Team, but new routines are being developed and staff are catching up by phone and zoom regularly.

The CEO has kept in regular contact with the Staff Team via text and phone, and they are enjoying the chance to make a difference by undertaking all those calls for Eastern Volunteers. Caladenia's Leadership Team is also a constant presence on both our Facebook pages, and the CEO is approachable and easy to contact at any time.

The CEO was interviewed by Pat Boucher from Yarra Ranges Life TV on Saturday morning, the interview was all about how the Pandemic is affecting our clients, and the services that we offer. You can watch it here: <https://www.facebook.com/YRLife.tv/videos/244726496664748/>

Link to Caladenia Volunteers and Friends Facebook Group
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/244610890040487/>

Caladenia's YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBwG9-2y_EIFg3ZVX_pLu_g

Caladenia website www.caladenia.com.au

Short Animated film showcasing caladenia's response to Covid-19 <https://youtu.be/gNmPn7nA8Fo>

Sarah Yeates – CEO
6/4/2020

Updated 4/5/2020