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Chair: Monica O'Wheel  
Secretary: John Shepherd  
Treasurer: Bruce Whyatt  
Margaret Calder  
Denise Callaghan  
Anne Tormey  
Lesley Walker

**COFA ANNUAL GENERAL**

**MEETING:**

2.00pm, Friday 11<sup>th</sup>  
November, 2017, at the  
Effective Living Centre,  
26 King William Road  
WAYVILLE  
(about 750m South of  
Greenhill Road )

**ITEMS FOR CIRCLE FOCUS**

If you wish to promote  
information about events  
from your Circle in Circle  
Focus, please forward  
details to  
[cofa.admin@bigpond.com](mailto:cofa.admin@bigpond.com)

# Circle Focus

Newsletter of Circle of Friends Australia Inc (COFA)  
Number 25, August 2017

**Sorry this Newsletter is Big; please don't turn off – there are some important things here.**

**Ride the Wave:** This is absolutely great news that Circle 111 has received, that in response their request to Surf Life Saving SA, a grant has been made by the State Government to SLSSA to provide water safety education to 150 refugee and asylum seeker individuals and families.

If you know any children, teenagers or families who would benefit from this amazing program, please read the supplements at the end of this newsletter and get applications to Kate Pittolo by the end of August. Kate can be contacted on 0433 928 923 or [cmpit@live.com.au](mailto:cmpit@live.com.au)

The first page is a history of the program. The second page is an application form – print this page and use to apply. The third page is a draft letter which will be sent to successful applicants.

**Please note the Blackwood Circle 7 High Tea** fundraiser at the end of this newsletter.

**“Exhaustion** – a state of extreme physical or mental tiredness”. On Friday at the General Meeting of COFA, it became evident that some of our Circle members are suffering exhaustion. The demeaning and cruel circumstances for many refugees and asylum seekers are stretching our Circles and members to their limit to respond.

At the risk of naming some people and missing others, I want to bring to your attention and care John Shepherd, Megs Lamb, Lesley Walker and Srs Pat Sealey and Meredith Evans. (please let me know the names of others we need to bear up).

If you hold to a faith, please remember these people in your prayers. If you engage in the world of the spiritual, please take their spirits in your hands. If you are a humanitarian, hold them in your mindfulness. Circles are devoted to supporting refugees and asylum seekers but we also need to support each other. Please spend time each day for these and others you may know who need our care, that they may know the strength and courage they need.

Circle of Friends Australia Inc is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission as a Deductible Gift Recipient. Donations \$2.00 and more are tax deductible.

**In the Face of Evil:** I read two stories on the internet this week. One of a man savagely beaten, robbed and stripped of his clothes while bystanders laughed and filmed the event on their phones. Secondly of a 15 yr old girl gang raped while onlookers stood by and did nothing.

History abounds with stories about people who have stood up and acted with compassion and passion for those suffering injustice. Stories are also plenty of some who have stood aside like spectators to evil.

At the General Meeting, Circles reported with great distress the circumstances being endured by refugee and asylum seeker families, in particular, those who have received "double negative" letters to their applications for visas and even for citizenship. They are cut off from Centrelink support and have no income. They are behind with rent and amassing debts for emergency, medical and everyday expenses.

Circles are expending all their resources to help these families survive and give hope for a future in the face of policies which can only be called inhuman, if undertaken in ignorance or evil if by intention.

Australian society is made aware of many injustices in our communities and also heard rationalisations about how and why they happen. By default, it appears that Australia will become a member of the UN human Rights Council 2018-2020, without having to go to a vote. It is a justifiable question to ask how in good faith Australia can stand up as a paragon of human rights when we allow such injustices to remain.

Australia once had an enviable human rights record among the nations but we seem to have lost our soul. Whether it is on the issue of indigenous disadvantage,

domestic violence, religious intolerance, racial prejudice or persecution and incarceration of refugees and asylum seekers who have come by boat, Australia is embarrassed by negative reports of our human rights record.

In the face of this evil injustice being perpetrated on refugees and asylum seekers, if you can offer any support to your Circles in any way, please do so.

**Having an ABN:** One of the benefits of the formation of Circle of Friends Australia Inc (COFA) is that we have an Australian Business Number (ABN). This means that Circles can apply to government and philanthropic organisations and use COFA's ABN as the indication of the Circle's bona fides.

Recently Circle 120 received \$10,000 from the Sidney Myer Foundation, Circle 7 received funds from Mitcham Council, Circle 11 has received funds from their local Council and Circle 111 has received a grant from a SA Council of Churches Bequest for sandplay therapy for children suffering from trauma.

If your Circle wishes to undertake a project that requires additional funds, think of the possibility of applying for a grant through COFA.

**SACC Bequest:** Early this year, The South Australian Council of Churches received a bequest from the estate of Yvonne Button, formerly a member of St Saviour's Anglican Church at Glen Osmond to "assist in the work of refugees and displaced persons."

Yvonne was committed to working alongside people in welcoming and supporting people who had sought refuge or were experiencing displacement. COFA is most grateful to SACC for funding Circle 111's project and for Yvonne for her gifts in life and death.

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## **Ride the Wave Supplements:**

- A. Information from Circle 111
- B. Application Form for participants
- C. Letter to participants

**Please encourage applicants to complete the application form and send to Kate Pittolo before 31 August**

## **SUPPLEMENT A**

### **“Ride the Wave” program through Surf Life Saving South Australia for 150 asylum seekers, refugees and migrants**

In September 2016 Circle of Friends 111 approached Surf Life Saving SA to see if they would be interested in providing some water safety education to the asylum seeker families that we supported. They expressed their interest and support for the request but indicated that they would need to try and obtain some funding.

**We were advised on 19 July 2017 by Surf Life Saving SA that they had received a grant through the SA Government which would allow them to provide a program to 150 participants. Each of the participants will receive the following at no cost to the participant:**

- 1a. **A half day beach safety session** – covering such things as where it is safe to swim, what the signs mean, the role of the life saver and precautions to take to ensure safety and wellbeing whilst at the beach;
- 1b. **A full day** - First Aid Training provide by accredited trainers (this will be for participants over 10 years of age).
2. **Twelve Month Membership with a Surf Life Saving Club plus the supply of a uniform including vest, brief (bather bottom or board short), track pants, t-shirt, back pack and cap.** A “buddy” be assigned to each participant to help make them welcome to the club and ensure they are aware of all the activities and services available through the membership.
3. **An opportunity to take part in the Life Saving World Championships 2018 (which are being held in SA) Community Program from 17 November 2018 – 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2018** – this includes to march in the Opening Parade, attending the Opening Ceremony and getting involved in all activities and events available through the event.

Surf Life Saving SA have expressed their willingness to work with us to refine how the program can be best delivered to maximise the participation and benefits of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

It is anticipated that the **program will commence in October this year.**

### **ACTION REQUIRED BY CIRCLE OF FRIENDS**

We need your help to identify individuals and families who would benefit from and would like to be a part of this wonderful program. We need to be able to provide Surf Life Saving SA with **a list of interested participants** and details including their address, contact information i.e. phone number, gender, uniform size etc. **by the end of August.**

We will be providing enrolment forms and details on where these need to be lodged in the near future.

Please contact Kate Pittolo from Circle of Friends 111 on 0433928923 ([cmpit@live.com.au](mailto:cmpit@live.com.au)) or Sam Fielke, Partnership & Stakeholder, Manager Surf Life Saving SA on 83546900 ([Sam.Fielke@surflifesavingsa.com.au](mailto:Sam.Fielke@surflifesavingsa.com.au)) if you require any additional information.

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**SUPPLEMENT B**



**RIDE  
THE  
WAVE**

<b>Facilitator</b>	Circle of Friends		
<b>Name</b>			
<b>Address</b>			
<b>Phone No</b>		<b>Email Address</b>	
<b>Place of Birth</b>		<b>Primary Language</b>	
<b>Date of Birth</b>		<b>Gender</b>	
<b>Uniform Size</b>			
<b>Vest</b>		<b>Brief/Short</b>	
<b>Track Pants</b>		<b>T-shirt</b>	
<b>Cap</b>			

<b>SLSSA Official Use Only</b> (Membership details)			
<b>Surf Club</b>			
<b>Mentors Name</b>			
<b>Mentors Mobile</b>		<b>Email</b>	
<b>Presidents Name</b>		<b>Signature</b>	

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## **SUPPLEMENT C**

Date

Dear

Congratulations on your selection to participate in the 'Ride the Wave' Program.

Your participation in this program will provide you with aquatic training and education; a surf club membership and the opportunity to take part in the Lifesaving World Championships.

**1. Training and Education:** A one and a half day-course teaching water safety on the beach and basic first aid training.

- a. First Aid** knowledge is invaluable for both you as the individual and for your community. It enables you to assist persons who become injured in the event of an accident or emergency situation until help arrives. First Aid skills can be applied in the home, the workplace or in public locations, therefore the more First Aid certified people there are in a community the safer that community becomes.

It allows those trained with the potentially life saving ability to assist an injured or ill person during a variety of emergency situations. In situations such as someone ingests a harmful substance, suffers from a heart attack, a seizure or stroke, is involved in a motor vehicle accident or is caught in a natural disaster, a person trained and knowledgeable in even the very basics of First Aid can be of extreme importance in assisting the injured person(s) until emergency responders arrive.

The more people that are First Aid trained and knowledgeable, the more the community as a whole benefits.

- b. Beach Safety:** You will learn about the beach and ocean; where it is safe to swim; what the signs mean; role of a Lifesaver and the precautions to take to ensure your safety and wellbeing whilst at the beach.

**2. Membership:**

- a.** You will receive a twelve month membership with a Surf Lifesaving Club. A 'Buddy' will be assigned to you; the Buddy will be your surf club friend, making you welcome at the Club and ensuring you're aware of all the activities and services available through the membership.
- b.** You will also receive an introductory uniform including a vest, brief (bather bottom or board short), track pants, t-shirt, back pack and cap.

**3. LWC2018 Community Program:**

You will be invited to compete in the LWC2018 Community Program. The events will take place from the 17<sup>th</sup> of November to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2018. An opportunity for you to march in the Opening Parade, attend the Opening Ceremony and get involved in all the activities and events made available through the event.

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Support The Blackwood Circle of Friends for  
Refugees.

You are invited to

High Tea Plus

**Violet Rowe** will present

***“A Few of My Favourite Things”***

A fascinating collection of antique clothing and  
accessories with stories to match.



**Where: Blackwood Uniting Church,**

**Main Road, (on the roundabout)**

**Date: Saturday September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017 at 2.00–4.00pm**

**Tickets \$15.00 from Blackwood Uniting Church 82787699  
or Carys: 82784114**

**Bookings essential**