



A message from the Co-ordinator about 'being there'

Many years ago I was a regular volunteer on a phone help line. I remember at one of our meetings someone said they were disappointed about their most recent shift because they didn't receive any calls. They said they felt as if they hadn't actually done anything to help anyone.

One of the other volunteers was quick to point out that this wasn't the case. They said the measure of what the volunteer had achieved was not the number of phone calls they had taken, but instead, it was about 'being there'. The volunteer had done what was needed to get to the agency that day and waited patiently by the phone, prepared in case someone called seeking support.

'Being there' is what Community Guardians do particularly well. You might not be called on to make decisions every day, but you are there, willing and available, should the need arise.

Also, you may not realise that as you attend to what often seems like run of the mill decisions, such as consent for flu vaccinations, sight, hearing, and dental checks, you are actively keeping up-to-date with your represented person's health and wellbeing. This means you are well prepared in the event that a more serious or emergency situation arises.

This idea of 'being there' does not end with you.

Even though as community guardians you know you are on standby in case of an emergency, it is understandable that when something serious does happen, you might feel somewhat overwhelmed. Your feelings of responsibility for the person's health and wellbeing may make it difficult

when you are faced with a serious decision about their health. But you are not alone.

Someone at the Office of the Public Advocate is always available if you need someone to talk to about decisions you may need to make. You can call or email me, or in my absence the Manager Guardianship. Or if you have an urgent decision to make after hours, you can call our on-call guardian on 1300 859 955. We are happy to talk with you about the decision you need to make, and support you as you proceed through your decision-making process.

We are here for you because you are there for them.



Well-deserved celebration for CGP volunteers

The commitment and effort of Community Guardianship Program volunteers was recognised late last year, with an invitation to attend Volunteering WA's garden party at Government House.

As well as celebrating International Volunteer Day 2015 and International Day of People with Disabilities, the group also celebrated the 10 year anniversary of the Community Guardianship Program.



CGP Co-ordinator Bethany Faye said she was sure everyone who attended would agree, it was a lovely evening in a beautiful garden, surrounded by fellow Western Australian volunteers.

"It was particularly exciting to see our volunteers receive their framed Community Guardianship Program certificates of appreciation signed by Cheryl Gwilliam, former Director General, Department of the Attorney General, and Pauline Bagdonavicius, Public Advocate," Bethany said.

The awards were presented to each CGP volunteer in attendance by Her Excellency the Honourable Kerry Sanderson, Governor of Western Australia. The Governor was joined by Brett Williamson, CEO, Volunteering Australia, while she presented the awards.



Some of the volunteers were able to bring along the person they represent to join in the celebrations.

"Our special guests each appeared to enjoy meeting the Governor, who appeared equally delighted in meeting them," Bethany said.

"Be there for others, but never leave yourself behind." - Dodinsky

COMMUNITY GUARDIANSHIP PROGRAM CONTACT DETAILS

Contact Community Guardianship Program Co-ordinator Bethany Faye by email bethany.faye@justice.wa.gov.au or call 9278 7300, Monday to Friday.



National Volunteer Week lunch

To recognise the incredible dedication and effort of Community Guardianship Program volunteers, the Office of the Public Advocate is hosting a volunteer lunch on 12 May. Lunch is being held from 12 noon to 1pm in the Argyle Room at the Public Trustee Office, Level 1, 553 Hay Street, Perth. Many CGP volunteers will be familiar with the venue, which has been used for a number of other CGP events.

For volunteers who have not been to the venue, the Public Trustee building is next door to the State Administrative Tribunal, just down from the new Perth Library and the Town Hall.

RSVP: Please let Bethany know by Monday 2 May, whether or not you are attending.

"Growth has its season. There are spring and summer, but there are also fall and winter. And then spring and summer again. As long as the roots are not severed, all is well and all be well." - Jerzy Kosinski

Mid-year training

This year's mid-year Community Guardianship Program training will be held immediately after the National Volunteer Week lunch, on Thursday 12 May.



Training will run from 1pm to 4pm in the Argyle Room at the Public Trustee Office, Level 1, 553 Hay Street, Perth.

This year's guest speaker will be Ashleigh Easthope from Helping Minds (formerly ARAFMI), which provides mental health and carer support services which are predominantly free.

CGP Co-ordinator Bethany Faye said Helping Minds delivers services including advocacy, assistance in understanding the mental health system, education, counselling and support, school holiday programs and respite.

"I am looking forward to Ashleigh's presentation and have let her know she can expect some very interesting and lively interaction with all of you," Bethany said.

RSVP: Please let Bethany know by Monday 2 May, whether or not you are attending.

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Procedural changes at State Administrative Tribunal

There have been a couple of changes at the State Administrative Tribunal (SAT) recently.

At the start and end of a hearing, it is now a requirement that everyone stand when the member/s enter the room and stand again when they leave. This change is aimed at clearly marking the start and finish of a hearing.

Hearing attendees may also be asked to give an affirmation before speaking at the hearing.

There are printed copies of the affirmation available for hearing attendees to read from. The affirmation is as follows:

*I DO SOLEMNLY AND SINCERELY AFFIRM THAT THE EVIDENCE I WILL GIVE
SHALL BE THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH.*

OPA is on the move

Staff from the Office of the Public Advocate have started preparing to move to their new premises in the David Malcolm Justice Centre, 28 Barrack Street, Perth.

The move is expected to happen in June this year.

CGP Co-ordinator Bethany Faye said other than the physical address change, the office's contact details should remain unchanged.



"I will keep you all posted with regard to the actual moving date as soon as I can, along with any other contact changes you may need to know," Bethany said.

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