



MENTAL HEALTH
**carers
voice**

Leading change and action with, and for, mental health Carers

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July 4

E-Bulletin

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Mental Health Carers Voice

****WANTED** Mental Health Carer Representatives**

The Mental Health Carers Voice Program is funded by the ACT Government for mental health carers to have a greater voice. Carer representatives are remunerated for their time and their expertise and, in addition, receive a range of training and supports.

Currently, the Program has several vacancies for carer representative positions, and people with lived experience of being a mental health carer are invited to consider becoming a carer representative. If you are interested in participating, but would prefer to be a little less engaged, there are vacancies for alternate representatives for various committees. The alternate representative attends meetings when the carer representative cannot attend.

Current vacancies:

ACT Health

- Mental Health Assessment Generation Information Collection Advisory Committee
- Risk Management Committee

- Smoke Free Evaluation Working Group
- Partnering with Consumers Committee (new Committee)
- Adult Mental Health Unit (AMHU) Clinical Effectiveness Committee
- Mental Health Services Plan – Executive Strategic Oversight Group

Mental Health Community Coalition ACT

- Peer Workforce Steering Committee

For more information about becoming a carer representative or for further information about any of the above committees, phone Doris Kordes on 6296 9936 or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au. More information is also available on the Mental Health Carers Voice website at www.carersvoice.com.au.

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Carers Corner

‘Consumer Carer Caucus: a great way for mental health consumers and carers to be in touch’, by Sharon Leigh-Hazell

The ACT Consumer Carer Caucus (of the Mental Health Community Coalition ACT – MHCC) is a unique forum for mental health consumers and carers. I recently joined (it is free for consumers and carers), and have attended a number of caucus meetings, a quarterly forum and I’ve also been accepted onto the board of MHCC as a carer representative.

I think I may have found what I have been looking for! The caucus aims:

- to utilise our lived experience and unique expertise in mental health, to identify ways to bring about positive change within the mental health sector
- to be a respected, combined voice for mental health consumers and carers in the ACT, speaking to government and community organisations
- and to shape and influence the work of MHCC ACT, so as to ensure it reflects the views and needs of consumers and carers.

So the caucus might be able to help you! It is a forum where you can share your stories and experiences in a safe, respectful and understanding environment. It is a place to hear the latest news about changes to policy, programs and services and how you might be affected. The caucus has four representatives on the MHCC ACT board. This helps to ensure that your views are heard, and will help MHCC ACT do its job more effectively as the peak body representing the not-for-profit community mental health sector in the ACT.

The caucus is currently undergoing an exciting transformation, which you might like to be a part of. I understand there is also a vacancy on the board of MHCC ACT for a carer representative. You might like to consider nominating for that too! (See details for the next caucus meeting at the end of this article.)

A little about me. I was my mother's carer from when I took on a role in my early teens, and later primary responsibility, when I was in my 20s. I was already involved with Carers ACT by the time of my mum's death at the age of 81 which helped me enormously. Since mum's death I have been seeking an avenue where I could feel that my 40 years of experience as a carer could help inform policy and service delivery for both mental health consumers and carers. My personal aim? That consumers and carers would not need to feel the stigmatisation, isolation and challenges that mum and I did. A big ask? Absolutely! But we all have to start somewhere and every little bit helps.

If you would like to know more about the ACT Consumer Carer Caucus from my perspective please feel free to give me a call on 0402 072 229. I work full time so it would be best to phone me outside business hours.

All the best and hope to see you there soon.

The next meeting, ACT Consumer Carer Caucus:

Date: Friday July 27

Time: 12.00pm – 2.00pm (lunch provided)

Location: Room 1.06, Level 1, The Griffin Centre, 20 Genge Street, Civic

For more information, contact Kat Bhathena on 6249 7756 or kat.bhathena@mhccact.org.au.

Papers for the meeting will be available on the caucus web page, [click here](#).

Carers ACT

July: Wellness Day – Special Session Including Lunch

Our Wellness Day this year will offer life-enhancing sessions including energising yoga, COTA's "Positive Outcomes Program", hand-on mini-sessions and demonstrations of alternative therapies, with a guided meditation to end the day.

Date: Wednesday 24 July

Time: 9.30am – 3.30pm (healthy lunch provided)

Location: Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt

RSVP: by Wednesday 17 July (please advise of any special dietary needs) to Reception on 6296 9900 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au

For suggestions on future topics, please email Marie at marie.falconer@carersact.org.au

August: Day Trip to the Craft and Quilt Fair

Come and enjoy a day at the Craft and Quilt Fair. Tickets will be distributed prior to the event. Carers are to arrange their own transport to and from the Fair. Tickets can be used on any day of the Fair (once only).

Date: Thursday 8 to Sunday 11 August 2013

Time: 10.00am – 4.30pm daily
Location: Royal Canberra Show, EPIC, Flemington Road, Mitchell
RSVP: by Wednesday 31 July to Reception on 6296 9900
or email rsvp@carersact.org.au

August: Advance Care Planning (ACP) and Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA)

Joy from the Respecting Patient Choices Unit at the Canberra Hospital will present information and assistance to carers to create their own ACP.

Date: Wednesday 14 August
Time: 10.00am – 12.00pm
Location: Carers ACT, 80 Beaufort Crescent, Holt
RSVP: Reception 6296 9900 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au
For suggestions on future topics, please email Marie at marie.falconer@carersact.org.au
[Click here for the flyer.](#)

August: Private Viewing at the National Gallery of Australia

Roy Lichtenstein: Pop Remix

This exhibition traces the artist's print projects from the 1950s to the 1990s.

Date: Wednesday 28 August
Time: 10.30am (Meet at the Main Entrance at 10.15am)
Location: The National Gallery of Australia, Parkes
RSVP: by Friday 23 August to Reception 6296 9900
or email rsvp@carersact.org.au

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Mental Health Carers – Southside Support Group

This is a support group for family members and friends caring for someone living with mental health issues. The group meets on one Wednesday evening most months.

Date: Wednesdays 28 August, 25 September, 30 October, 27 November,
18 December (no groups in January or July)
Time: 6.00pm – 8.00pm
Location: Woden Smith Family, Corner of Launceston and Easty Streets, Woden
For further information please call 1800 242 636 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au

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Mental Health Carers – Northside Support Group

This is a support group for family members and friends caring for someone living with mental health issues. The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month.

Date: Tuesdays 9 July, 6 August (5:30pm start), 10 September, 8 October,
12 November, 10 December (no groups in January or July)
Time: 5.00pm – 7.00pm

Location: Carers ACT, 80 Beaufort Crescent, Holt

For further information please call 1800 242 636 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au

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Mental Health Carers Respite — 1800 052 222

The Mental Health Respite Program provides flexible respite and other supports to meet the individual needs of carers of people with severe mental illness, autism or intellectual disabilities and their families. Services include respite options based on needs assessments, information and referral, links to education programs, counselling, peer support, advocacy services and social and recreational activities. Please call 1800 052 222 or email

mentalhealth.respite@carersact.org.au. The Mental Health Respite program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs. For more information about support available under this Program, visit the Carers ACT [website](#).

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Counselling at Carers ACT — Supporting Family Carers — 1800 242 636

Did you know that Carers ACT can provide short-term counselling for family carers? Our counselling service can help you manage difficult situations and balance caring in your life. Qualified counsellors are located on site in Holt and Woden to provide carers with confidential and professional face-to-face and telephone counselling. Call the Carer Advisory Service to make an appointment on 1800 242 636. Click here for more information on [support that Carers ACT counsellors can offer mental health carers](#).

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ACT News

University of Canberra Public Hospital Information Session

Consumers and carers were invited to an information and Q&A session with representatives from ACT Health, held on 18 June. This event was organised by Health Care Consumers' Association Inc. in partnership with ACT Health. The aim was to provide consumers and carers with information about an upcoming health infrastructure project, which will provide sub-acute services for people with aged care, mental health and rehabilitation needs.

[Click here](#) for an overview of the project. [Click here](#) to see the questions discussed at the session.

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MHCC e-bulletin out now

The Mental Health Community Coalition ACT Inc (MHCC) have just released their fortnightly e-bulletin. In this issue, Executive Officer Ian Rentsch discusses their continuing work with National Disability Services and the ACT NDIS Implementation Task Group. [Click here](#) to see the bulletin.

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Reminder – Information Session Enhanced Service Offer (ESO)

Carers ACT has previously promoted information about the ACT Government's ESO for eligible people with a disability, or a psychosocial disability in this E-Bulletin. An information session for people with psychosocial disability will be held on Wednesday 17 July 12.30 – 2.00pm at the Rainbow, Phillip Avenue, Watson. Further information about ESO eligibility, types of grants and funding, and other information sessions is available [here](#). Applications are now open and information about how to apply is available [here](#).

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National & International News and Research

New Survey shows cuts to Mental Health Sessions hitting hard in 2013

A new survey by the Australian Psychological Society (APS) shows that cuts to Medicare-rebated psychology treatment sessions, applicable from January this year, are having a severe impact on the ability of people with mental health problems to access urgently required and appropriate treatment. In January 2013 the Government reduced the number of Medicare-rebatable psychological sessions available under the Better Access to Mental Health Care scheme to 10 per year per person, down from a possible 18 when the initiative was introduced in 2006. The survey of over 400 clients who, at the end of the allowable 10 sessions of treatment, were judged by their psychologist to need further treatment, shows 78 per cent of these people had moderate to severe mental health problems, with the most prevalent conditions being depression, anxiety and posttraumatic stress.

[Click here](#) to see the APS media release, and for further contact details.

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More support for Young Carers

Young carers of people with mental illness will now be better supported by a national counselling service, thanks to a \$251,000 investment from the Australian Government. There are around 850,000 young carers in Australia, and 11 per cent of these are primary carers of persons with a mental illness. Young carers are at far greater risk of developing mental health problems than other young people. This funding boost will allow Carers Australia to increase support for young carers of people with mental illness by delivering a counsellor training

program to its national counselling program.

[Click here](#) to see the media release.

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Jacinta Collins, new Minister for Mental Health and Ageing

Victorian Senator, Jacinta Collins, is the new Minister for Mental Health and Ageing following ministerial changes after the election of Kevin Rudd as the new Prime Minister. [Click here](#) for Minister Collins' profile. [Click here](#) for the new cabinet.

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New report on happiness says that Carers still have the lowest wellbeing

A new report of key findings from seven years of research into the lives and happiness of the Australian population finds that carers still have the lowest wellbeing of any population group surveyed by researchers. The report is based on the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index, which is a partnership between Australian Unity and Deakin University. This is the nation's most regular and comprehensive measure on how every-day Australians are feeling about themselves and their lives.

Through regular surveys and special reports, the Wellbeing Index provides insight into what's making us happy... or not so happy. It quantifies the impact that social issues, such as increasing personal debt, are having on our quality of life.

[Click here](#) to see the report entitled, *What makes you happy?* The Carers section is on pages 38 to 40. And who are the happiest Australians? Those who hold the 'trifecta' which comprises, 'A loving partner, an annual \$100,000 household income, and an activity that provides a sense of purpose.'

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Recruiting for a new insomnia study trial

The Black Dog Institute, in collaboration with Brain and Mind Research Institute, University of Sydney; Centre for Mental Health Research, Australian National University; Orygen Youth Health, University of Melbourne; and University of Virginia, USA are currently recruiting for a ground-breaking trial of web-based treatment for insomnia. This trial, 'The GoodNight Study', will recruit 1,600 adults aged 18-64 Australia-wide and test the efficacy of a 9-week fully-automated web-based program for insomnia. Following completion, participants will be followed up every six months for a period of 18 months, and potentially beyond, to ascertain the longer-term benefits of the program.

If you would like to be part of this trial, [click here](#) for more information.

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Mental Health Services (TheMHS) 2013 Conference

The annual TheMHS Conference will be held in Melbourne, 20–23 August. This year's program will include multiple sessions focusing on:

- Developing the Mental Health Workforce
- Mental Health and the Law
- Mental Health Recovery Services
- The Mental Health Reform Agenda.

Details of the program and related conference activities can be found [here](#). Early bird registration ends soon on 12 July. [Click here](#) to register on line.

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Creative Approaches to Supporting Recovery Workshop

Inside Out and Associates Australia are presenting an all-day workshop, 'Creative Approaches to Supporting Recovery'. Presenter May Hagan is an international speaker, consultant and writer. The workshop will use interactive methods to illuminate the lived experience of distress and recovery, and to demonstrate how recovery tools can be used. [Click here](#) to see Mary's website.

Date: Wednesday 17 July

Time: 9.00am – 5.00pm

Location: Blacktown Workers Club, 55 Campbell Street, Blacktown NSW

For further information on the workshop, please email info@insideoutconversations.com.au

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In the media

- [Severe Mental Illness Support to Flow Through Partnership Services](#)
- [Young People to Benefit from New *headspace* Sites](#)
- [First Early Psychosis Service Opens in Melbourne](#)
- [Suicidal Teens Turn to Social Media, Not Hotlines & Support Groups](#)
- [Daycare beneficial to children with depressed mothers](#)
- [Online mini-drama helps people to discuss mental health in the workplace](#)
- [Coalition Government improving safety for women in mental health care](#)
- [Mental Health Targeted Call for Research: Suicide Prevention in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth](#)
- [Mental Health beds shortages fear](#)

Employment Opportunities

ACT Medicare Local and the ACT Partners in Recovery (PIR) program: Support Facilitators

ACT Medicare Local and the ACT Partners in Recovery (PIR) program is seeking Support Facilitators to fill new full time positions in its committed and dynamic Canberra based team.

Support Facilitators will engage people with a severe mental illness and complex needs, and their carers and families, to develop coordinated and integrated support plans. Support facilitators work in partnership with service providers to ensure the coordination of care for clients who have severe mental illness and complex needs. Support facilitation occurs across services providing support within the social determinants of mental health to achieve the goals of the consumer.

Specifically, the role will require you to:

1. Work within the policies, procedures, philosophies and values of the PIR program and of the 'employing agency' to achieve the aims and objectives of the PIR program.
2. Promote a Collaborative Recovery Oriented Model and other best practice, evidence based models to service providers so that consumers are able to define recovery and support goals and re-establish connections with the community through a coordinated care framework.
3. Develop and maintain partnerships with service providers so that effective wrap around services are delivered to PIR clients.
4. Maintain up to date knowledge of current service provision and best practice within the areas of primary health care, community sector development, mental health services and research relevant to the target group.
5. Work within and share equal responsibility with the PIR Support Facilitators team and the employing agency to meet the recovery goals of the consumer.
6. Work to communicate appropriately within a confidential framework.

Successful candidates will enjoy a multidisciplinary team based environment, flexible working arrangements and ongoing professional development. The position requires a minimum Certificate 4 in Mental Health or related qualification and demonstrated experience at a senior support worker level.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are strongly encouraged to apply; as are people with lived experience of mental illness.

Applications must address the selection criteria and be received by cob Friday 12 July 2013.

[Click here](#) to visit the website for further information about this position, or [click here](#) to see attached flyer.

Or you can contact Jason Morrissey, on 6287 8099, j.morrissey@actml.com.au

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ACT Medicare Local and the ACT Partners in Recovery (PIR) program: Team Leaders

ACT Medicare Local and the ACT Partners in Recovery (PIR) program is seeking Team Leaders to fill new full time positions in its Canberra based PIR Support Facilitation program. The Team Leader position will have dual responsibilities of providing leadership within the PIR Team and client engagement as a Support Facilitator.

Team Leaders will ensure the quality coordination of care by working closely with Support Facilitators who will be employed by partnership agencies.

Specifically, the role will require you to:

1. Assist the development of and work within the policies, procedures, philosophies and values of the PIR program and of the employing agency to achieve the aims and objectives of the PIR program.
2. Promote a Collaborative Recovery Oriented Model and other best practice, evidence based models to service providers so that consumers are able to define recovery and support goals and re-establish connections with the community through a coordinated care framework.
3. Develop and maintain partnerships to foster collaboration between relevant sectors, services and support.
4. Ensure professional and sector development through maintaining and promoting current knowledge of integrated service provision and collaborative practice within the areas of primary health care, community sector development, mental health services and research relevant to the target group.
5. Work within and share equal responsibility with the PIR Support Facilitators team and the employing agency to meet the recovery goals of the consumer.
6. Work to communicate appropriately within a confidential framework. Successful candidates will enjoy a multidisciplinary team based environment, flexible working arrangements and ongoing professional development.

The position requires a minimum Certificate 4 in Mental Health or related qualification, demonstrated experience in leading small teams, and demonstrated experience at a senior support worker level.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are strongly encouraged to apply; as are people with lived experience of mental illness.

Applications must address the selection criteria and be received by cob Friday 12 July 2013.

[Click here](#) to visit the website for further information about this position, or [click here](#) to see attached flyer.

You can also contact Jason Morrissey, on 6287 8099, j.morrissey@actml.com.au

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If you or someone you know may be at risk of suicide contact Lifeline 131 114, beyondblue 1300 224 636, or Salvo Care Line 1300 363 622.

The opinions expressed in this E-Bulletin do not necessarily reflect the opinions and views of Carers ACT.

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www.carersvoice.com.au