



MENTAL HEALTH
**carers
voice**

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

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Sept 5

E-Bulletin

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Breaking News — Carers Australia 2013 Election Campaign

Unpaid Carers — The Necessary Investment

In order to ensure that carers are effectively heard in the forthcoming election campaign, Carers Australia has produced an election campaign document entitled 'Unpaid carers: the necessary investment'. This document sets out five key election commitments that Carers Australia believe any incoming government must adopt.

[Click here](#) to read our election platform.

[Click here](#) for a link to the Federal Election edition of Carers National News, which includes a welcome and interview with the new Carers Australia President, Karen Cook.

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Mental Health Carers Voice

Mental Health Carer Networking & Consulting Forums

Suicide Prevention Forum for Mental Health Carers

September is Worldwide Suicide Prevention Month. In 2013, the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are co-sponsoring World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September. The theme of this 11th anniversary event is "Stigma: A Major Barrier for Suicide Prevention."

To mark Worldwide Suicide Prevention Month, Carers ACT is hosting a suicide prevention forum for mental health carers. This will be an informal and interactive event designed to give carers an opportunity to engage with a range of clinical and community service providers in a supportive and inclusive environment. The focus of this forum is not to share stories, rather to talk with service providers around suicide prevention.

Date: Wednesday 11 September
Time: 12.00pm – 2.00pm
Location: The Hub, Carers ACT, 2/80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt
Cost: Free. Lunch will be provided
RSVP: 5.00pm Monday, 9 September. Phone Emma on 6296 9952 or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au.

Secure Mental Health Unit Focus Group

The ACT Government is embarking on a new health infrastructure project to build a Secure Mental Health Unit (SMHU). This facility will respond to the needs of mental health consumers who are or have become involved with the criminal justice system (forensic) and for those civil consumers who cannot be treated in a less restrictive environment. The SMHU will form part of an integrated care pathway for those who need care and treatment as a result of their mental illness and associated co-morbidity. The SMHU will be a purpose built, secure mental health facility located at Symonston (former Quamby site). This facility will provide a safe clinical and therapeutic environment for people who may be characterised as complex, often difficult to treat and are of significant risk to others. The unit will accommodate 25 beds and care for people with low to medium secure needs. The 25 beds will be configured into an acute wing and a rehabilitative wing. Ten beds will provide care for those who are acutely mentally unwell and 15 beds will be for rehabilitative care.

Carers ACT and Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol & Drug Services would like to invite you to a facilitated focus group regarding the SMHU Model of Care and the facility planning. The SMHU Model of Care will be distributed to community groups during the week of the 9th September, and a copy of the draft Model of Care (including an Executive Summary) will be available at the focus group meeting.

Date: Tuesday 24 September
Time: 5.00 – 6.30pm
Location: The Hub, Carers ACT, 2/80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt
Cost: Free. Refreshments will be provided

RSVP: 5.00pm Friday, 19 September. Phone Emma on 6296 9952 or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au.

More information about the Secure Mental Health Unit and other new mental health facilities may be accessed [here](#).

Understanding Carers Rights Forum, Mental Health Week

In response to carers' recommendations in an event held by Carers ACT earlier this year, Carers ACT is hosting a forum to raise carer awareness of their rights in the mental health system. A panel of guest speakers from diverse backgrounds will present and engage in Q&A with forum participants.

Date: Wednesday 9 October

Time: 12.00pm – 3.00pm

Location: Quality Inn, Woden

Cost: Free. Lunch will be provided

RSVP: 5.00pm Thursday, 3 October. Phone Emma on 6296 9952 or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au.

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****Exciting new carer representative positions****

Mental health carers are invited to consider nominating for a representative role on a range of committees. In this E-Bulletin, we wish to highlight two important committee vacancies with ACT Health, Division of Mental Health Justice Health Alcohol & Drugs:

- Consumer and Carer Feedback Committee, Adult Mental Health Unit
- Clinical Effectiveness Committee, Adult Mental Health Unit

Please do not hesitate to contact Emma or Doris for more information about these committees and other vacant representative positions; or just to chat about what's involved in taking on a carer representative role. Emma may be phoned on 6296 9952 or email emma.judges@carersact.org.au; and Doris may be contacted on 6296 9936 or email doris.kordes@carersact.org.au.

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'Invisible Care' – research study on mental health carers' access to Carers Payment and Carer Allowance

In August 2013, Carers Victoria released the findings of a research study with mental health carers - *Invisible care. Access to Carer Payment and Carer Allowance by Victorian carers of a person with mental illness*. This study found that carers' access to Carer Allowance and Carer Payment varied according to:

- medical condition of the person with a mental illness. For example, carers of a person with depression had higher rates of access to the payments than those caring for a person with schizophrenia

- type of relationship with the person being cared for. Spousal carers were more likely to receive payments than parent carers
- gender. Male spousal carers were more likely to receive payments than female spousal carers, and
- cohabitation. Carers who cohabited with the person they cared for were much more likely to receive either Carer Payment or Carer Allowance than those who lived separately.

A survey of just under 200 carers who participated in the study revealed that mothers of a son or daughter with schizophrenia who lived separately were amongst those least likely to receive Carer Allowance or Carer Payment, even though they often provided significant care to a highly vulnerable population.

Barriers identified in the report include an application and assessment process (ADAT) that is particularly insensitive to the care needs of people with long-term psychosocial disability; the eligibility threshold is higher for people living in separate accommodation than for those coresiding (yet adults with schizophrenia or other psychotic disorders may be more likely to live separately from their carer than people with other disabling conditions); bureaucratic complexity; and gender expectations (of women).

The full report may be downloaded at:

http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/storage/To%20link%20to%2020130802_Misunderstood%20and%20under%20supported_%20the%20plight%20of%20the%20mentally%20ill%20and%20their%20carers.pdf.

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Carers Corner

Requesting Carer's stories to support the establishment of A HOME in Canberra

During the past year a community group has found that there is a great need for additional quality and affordable supported accommodation to be provided for people in Canberra with mental illness. The group considers that a facility based on the successful model of HOME in Queanbeyan is the best solution to help address this serious problem.

As a result, an organising committee for A HOME in Canberra has been formed, under the auspices of the Board of HOME in Queanbeyan.

The goal of this committee is to develop and implement a strategy to build and operate A HOME in Canberra.

A HOME in Canberra's vision is to provide a safe, supportive and caring home for people with enduring mental illness, who are unable to live independently, or who are at risk of becoming homeless. The target for the completion of construction and welcoming the first residents to A HOME in Canberra is 30 June 2015.

A preliminary business plan has been developed to translate the vision to reality. The organising committee invites carers to provide stories which can be used with the business plan to help demonstrate the need for A HOME in Canberra.

It would be appreciated if interested carers could send their story by email, keeping them concise, to John Tucker at ejtucker42@outlook.com or send their story by post, to John Tucker, 23 Southern Close, Chisholm ACT 2905. Contributions are requested by 12 September. To protect your anonymity and confidentiality, your contributions will be de-identified.

Please phone John on 6291 7869 or on mob 0411 350 547 if you have any queries.

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Schizophrenia — changing our behaviour

Have you tried to fix another person's problems. When the problem is schizophrenia, it is so hard to fix anything. As carers, we spend so much time asking *"did you take your medication? Have you had a shower? Your clothes are filthy, take them off please and I'll wash them for you. Where have you been sleeping? I can tell you've been on drugs? When did you last eat? Don't eat that, it's bad for you. That's enough"*.

What is happening is that all our conversation is focused around their illness. And schizophrenia is only a part of the person we care for.

Why don't we acknowledge him or her as a person, and change **our** behaviour, not theirs.

Some carers might say that in all the chaos, it is impossible to behave differently but it's as simple as 1,2,3. Give these suggestions a try – the more you work at this, the better your relationship and trust for one another will be.

1. *"Have I told you how proud I am of you – you are doing the very best you can"*.
2. *"Do I have your permission to talk to ...about you. If you don't want me to say anything, I won't. I won't interfere in your business if you don't want me to"*.
3. *"I know I do the wrong thing sometimes. I only do it because I'm a worrier. I am sorry that I upset you again"*.

When the carer learns to respect their loved one's choices in all its tragedy and in all the beauty and all the terror, they may see that they themselves live an extraordinarily rich and quite amazing life – that they can learn to be resilient and can rise above blaming others. It's a life of acceptance.

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Carers ACT

New carer services in Gungahlin

On 4 September 2013 Carers ACT launched the Mental Health Carers Connection Program and a new service centre in Gungahlin (Ngunnawal Neighbourhood Centre). Guest speakers at the launch included Andrew Leigh MP and Clyde Rathbone, Brumby player. Our new office will be a gateway for carers of people with mental illness in the Gungahlin region, which has a younger population base with few established community services. The program's new services for carers include counselling, information forums, support groups and carer education and training. Importantly, people in North Canberra will be able to access the full suite of holistic services provided by Carers ACT through our Ngunnawal office. Carers ACT is working in partnership with Communities@Work.

Call the Carers ACT Carer Advisory Line 1800 242 636 to find out more about this program or email carermh@carersact.org.au.

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

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Vulnerable Canberrans receive long-awaited help

Carers ACT is a member of the ACT's Partners in Recovery consortium, a new program to improve the lives of over 430 Canberrans living with severe and persistent mental illness with complex needs. The program was launched by Senator The Hon Jacinta Collins, Minister for Mental Health and Ageing...

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

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Dementia Awareness Week — Open day at The Cottage in Deakin

As part of Dementia Awareness Week 2013 Alzheimer's Australia ACT, in partnership with Carers ACT, is holding an Open Day at The Cottage in Deakin.

The Cottage is Canberra's premier short-term respite option for carers of people with dementia. The Open Day is an opportunity for people to visit The Cottage and take part in an informative and enjoyable morning of activities.

Date: Thursday 26 September
Time: 10.00am – 1.30pm
Location: The Cottage, 117 Denison Street, Deakin
Cost: Free
RSVP: By Thursday 19 September
Alzheimer's Australia ACT
Phone: 6255 0722

[Click here](#) to see the flyer.

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Disability Australia — Enhanced Service Offer Planners at Carers ACT

Applications for the Enhanced Service Offer grants have now opened in the ACT. These grants are designed to assist people who have a disability, due to a physical, cognitive, intellectual, psychosocial or sensory impairment and their families to be ready for the commencement of Disability Care, which will commence in July 2014 in the ACT, and to provide support for them in the interim. There are three types of Grants available, Aids, Equipment and Minor Modifications, Quality of Life and Flexible Support and Services Grants.

Planners from the Enhanced Services Offer will be spending every Tuesday between 1 October – 5 November 2013 at Carers ACT Holt office to assist carers to fill in and lodge their applications for the grants. Appointments will be essential.

The Planners would appreciate it if carers, recipients and their families can consider the supports, services or items that they would like to apply for, and the difference it will make in their lives, prior to coming to the appointment.

Date: Every Tuesday on 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 October, and 5 November

Time: By appointment

Venue: Carers ACT, 80 Beaufort Crescent, Holt

RSVP: Bookings are essential. Phone Elaine on 6296 9924 or Carers ACT Reception on 6296 9900 to make an appointment.

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The Branch Out Café

Now open 5 days per week 8.30am to 1.00pm at 80 Beaufort Crescent, Holt.

The heating is perfect. So come in for morning tea or lunch. Consider the café for catering events.

For more information call 6296 9900 or email Branchoutcafe@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 10 September, 8 October,
12 November, 10 December (no groups in January or July)

Time: 5.00pm – 7.00pm

Location: Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire 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

Let's Talk — For Suicide Prevention

You can help someone who is feeling suicidal. It is distressing to realise that someone close to you may be considering taking their own life. It is often difficult to know what to say or what to do. People need to know that it is OK to Talk.

Below are some suggestions of how you might support someone you know who may be at risk:

- Stay calm and ask the person if they are thinking of suicide. People are often fearful that asking may introduce the thought to the person. This is a myth.
- Spend time with the person, encourage them to talk about how they are feeling and to get further professional advice;
- Don't agree to keep it a secret. The person's safety is your main concern. You may need to talk to someone else to make sure that the person is safe;
- Remember, most people who consider taking their own life get through the crisis.
- What to do if someone has attempted suicide:
 - Get medical help immediately. Call 000
 - Make sure that the person receives ongoing support. People who have attempted suicide have a much higher risk of attempting suicide again in the days, weeks and months following.
- Be aware of your own reactions. Supporting someone at risk of suicide is stressful. Take care of yourself by taking time out to relax and do things you enjoy.

Check out the new Let's Talk website for more information

www.health.act.gov.au/suicideprevention

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Save the Date — Launch of Mental Health Week

The ACT Mental Health Week Committee would like to announce the Launch of ACT Mental Health Week:

ACT Mental Health and Wellbeing Services Expo

Date: Tuesday 8 October

Time: 10.00am – 1.00pm

Location: Ann Harding Conference Centre, University Drive South, Building 24 NATSEM Building, University of Canberra

More information and stall holder registration forms available next week! For more information contact Rachel on 6249 7756 or email Rachel.muller@mhccact.org.au

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Mental Health Week Awards 2013

The ACT Mental Health Week Awards are back for 2013! The ACT Mental Health Week Awards were established to recognise the achievements of individuals and organisations who have worked to improve understanding, awareness, service provision and the general mental health and wellbeing of the Canberra community over the past 12 months. Organisations and/or individuals may be nominated under the following nine award categories:

Organisations, Partnerships and Strategic Alliances:

1. Service Delivery and Innovation Award
2. Cross Sector Collaboration Award
3. Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention Award

Individual Employees:

4. Service Delivery and Innovation Award
5. Cross Sector Collaboration Award
6. Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention Award

Consumer and Carer Involvement and Engagement:

7. Consumer Contribution to Sector Award
8. Carer Contribution to Sector Award

Volunteer Award:

9. Mental Health Volunteer Award

Nominations close on 1 October 2013. More information about the Mental Health Week Awards is available in the [Guidelines and Nomination Form](#) or visit MHCC ACT's website www.mhccact.org.au. Enquiries about the Awards may be directed to Rachel Muller, Mental Health Community Coalition ACT on 6249 7756 or email Rachel.muller@mhccact.org.au

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Mindscapes Art and Photography Competition for 2013

After the huge success of the competition over the last few years we are pleased to announce its return for 2013!

It's time to get creative with your cameras, paint brushes, canvas or whatever your favourite medium may be for the Mindscapes Art and Photography exhibition!

This year's theme is "Connectivity".

Guidelines for Entries

- Exhibition open to photography and art work of any medium
- Entries can be submitted to Belconnen Community Centre, Swanson Court, Belconnen.

Closing date for entries is Thursday 26 September 2013

Categories will include:

- Open – anyone is able to enter into this category
- Consumer and Carers – Mental Health Consumers and their Carers can enter
- Student – High School, College or Tertiary Students can enter this category if they choose (student number & name of school is required to enter this category).

The art and photography will be shortlisted by the Mindscapes committee. From the shortlisted art and photography a panel of judges will choose a winner for each category. Prizes will be awarded in each category.

The art works will be exhibited at “gallery@belconnen” Belconnen Community Centre from Wednesday 2 October until Friday 18 October to coincide with Mental Health Week.

The Special opening will be held on Thursday 3 October at 4.30pm in the Belconnen Community Centre Gallery.

Download an entry form from www.mhccact.org.

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Mindscapes Mish Mash Variety Night

The Mindscapes Mish Mash Variety Night wants YOU!

This year we're mixing it up at the Mindscapes Festival with the debut of the Mindscapes Mish Mash Variety Night: an evening of arts and entertainment by a cross section of consumers, carers, amateurs, and professionals. Whether you're a juggler, a joker, an actor, performance artist, a dancer, muso, magician or any other type of performer... We'd love to have you at the Mindscapes Mish Mash. Performance will be held during Mental Health Week on Thursday October 10 from 7.00 – 11.00pm at the White Eagle Polish Club, Turner.

This Variety Night is open to everyone!!

For more info please contact Ben Drysdale on 6264 0252 or ben.drysdale@bcsact.com.au

Closing date for entries is Monday 9 September 2013! Visit www.mhccact.org.au to download and EOI!

Keep an eye on www.mhccact.org.au for all upcoming Mindscapes Festival information! Follow us @ #mindscapes and www.facebook.com/mindscapesfestival

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Mindscapes Festival Save the Date

Mindscapes Short Film Festival

Date: Wednesday 9 October

Time: 6.00pm – 9.30pm

Location: National Film and Sound Archive, McCoy Circuit, Acton

For more information email Rachel.Muller@mhccact.org.au

Mish Mash Variety Night

Date: Thursday 10 October

Time: 7.00pm – 11.00pm

Location: Polish White Eagle Club Canberra, 38 David Street, Turner

For more information email ben.drysdale@bcsact.com.au

Poetry night

Date: Thursday 17 October

Time: 6.30pm – 8.00pm

Location: Smiths Alternative, 76 Alinga Street, Canberra City

For more information email jacqui@mieact.org.au

Art and Photography Competition

Date: Thursday 3 October – Friday 18 October

Location: Belconnen Community Centre, 26 Chandler Street, Belconnen

For more information email Kate.Wells@bcsact.com.au

Keep an eye on www.mhccact.org.au for all upcoming Mindscapes Festival information! Follow us @ #mindscapes and www.facebook.com/mindscapesfestival

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Mental Health Community Coalition ACT E-Bulletin

It is only five weeks until ACT Mental Health Week! The calendar of events will be available on the Mental Health Community Coalition website www.mhccact.org.au from next week! [Click here](#) for the latest Mental Health Community Coalition E-Bulletin.

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MoneySmart Week 2013

Care Inc. is holding a MoneySmart Week 2013 event. Care Inc. is facilitating a free 'Ask An Expert' session for people 50 and over. The panel will consist of experts from government and non government agencies including:

- National Information Centre on Retirement Investments Inc
- Centrelink's Financial Investment Service
- Office of Regulatory Services
- Council on the Ageing ACT
- Australian Federal Police (Scams and Do Not Knock Campaign)

Morning tea will be provided and there will be plenty of opportunity to ask questions directly to the services participating. We would love to see you there and if you have a client, friend, family member or colleague that may benefit from attending this event – please forward them the link. We also encourage service providers who work with clients in this age group to come along – there will be a lot of information and resources available from the agencies participating.

Date: Friday 6 September
Time: 10.30am – 12.30pm
Location: Civic Library (upstairs)

For more information, please visit www.carefcs.org or to register please visit www.library.act.gov.au (click on the Programs and Events tab - events are in date order) or phone 6205 9000 (bookings are recommended).

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ACT Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing call for nominations

The Minister for Ageing, Mr Shane Rattenbury MLA, is seeking nominations for membership of the 2014–15 ACT Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing.

The Council provides strategic advice to the Minister for Ageing on issues affecting older Canberrans.

Further information, including Terms of Reference, is available at:
http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/wac/ageing/advisory_council_on_ageing/recruitment.

Applications can be made online at: <https://dhcs.smartygrants.com.au/>.

For further assistance phone the ACT Office for Ageing, Community Services Directorate, on 6207 6138 or email communitypolicy@act.gov.au

The closing date for nominations is 13 September 2013.

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Mental Health in Multicultural Australia (MHiMA) Consumer and Carer Working Groups: Vacancies

The MHiMA project is funded by the Australian Government, Department of Health & Ageing to provide a national focus for advice and support to providers and governments on mental health and suicide prevention for people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. [Click here](#) for the August edition of the Mental Health in Multicultural Australia newsletter.

In February 2013, MHiMA established a Consumer Working Group and a Carer Working Group. Four vacancies exist across both groups. We are seeking:

- Consumer representatives from Tasmania and the Northern Territory
- Carer representatives from Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory

Further information about how to apply, including the application form, can be found at the following link:

<http://www.mhima.org.au/mhima-latest-news/mhima-seeking-more-consumer-and-carer-representatives-in-some-states-and-territories>

Applications close on **September 27th 2013**. For further information about the Working Groups, please contact Amy Baker on (08) 8302 2643 or amy@mhima.org.au.

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Mental health Carers Coffee & Chat

An informal monthly get together for anyone who has a family member or friend experiencing mental health problems. No agenda, just coffee and conversation.

Date: 19 August (3rd Monday each month)

Time: 12.30 – 2.00pm

Venue: CIT Woden café canteen area, C Block, Ainsworth Street, Phillip

Buy good coffee from the café, BYO or buy your lunch.

For more information, contact CIT Skills for Carers on 6207 3628 or CarerSkills@cit.edu.au

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When being angry no longer works — Personal Development course for Women

The Women's Information and Referral Centre are offering a Wednesday mornings course, held over six weeks. This is an interactive and practical course for women who seek to improve their strategies to manage anger and other strong emotions in an effective and a positive way.

Aims of the course include:

- Develop an awareness of the external and internal causes of anger
- Learn to respect and trust your own perceptions and emotions
- Work through past anger and other associated emotions
- Notice emotional triggers and change automatic reactive responses
- Learn to self-soothe effectively and compassionately
- Communicate with confidence and effectively assert yourself
- Explore positive physical, emotional and behavioural solutions for anger
- Use anger effectively to motivate and energise yourself.

Date: Wednesdays 14 August to 18 September

Time: 9.30am – 12.00pm

Location: Women's Information and Referral Centre,
Ground Floor, London Court, 13 London Circuit, Canberra City

Cost: \$80.00 and \$40.00 concession (please discuss with their staff)

For more information or to register your interest, please contact the Women's Information and Referral Centre on 6205 0303 or 6205 1075, email wirc@act.gov.au or drop in and visit them at the address above.

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Call for Presenters: ACT Youth Affairs Conference

The ACT Youth Affairs Conference Steering Committee is calling for Expressions of Interest to present at the upcoming ACT Youth Affairs Conference on 27 and 28 November 2013.

The Conference will provide an opportunity for workers across the complex range of services for young people in the ACT and the region to participate in and hear about leading research, discussion, workshops, and practice development. The Conference will aim to:

We are currently seeking presentations and workshops that address one or more of the following themes:

- Youth Engagement
- Early Intervention
- Youth Led Organisations / Projects
- Co-Design
- Research and Evidence in Youth Service Delivery (incl. evaluation, reflective practice, etc
Online Engagement / Social Media Youth Sector Workforce

Visit www.youthcoalition.net to download the information flyer and Expression of Interest form. Expressions of Interest are due by 5.00pm 6 September 2013.

For further details or assistance, please contact the Conference Coordinator, Katrina Campion on 6247 3540 or email katrina@youthcoalition.net.

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National & International News and Research

United mental health sector calls for real mental health reform

An alliance of 46 mental health sector organisations and stakeholders are calling on all political parties to commit to five specific and sustainable reforms to mental health services, following the release of the most significant reports into mental health in over a decade.

The Report, *Obsessive Hope Disorder: Reflections on 30 years of mental health reform in Australia and visions for the future*, was launched by former Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commissioner, Brian Burdekin AO on 6 August, at the start of the Federal Election

campaign.

Today, an alliance of community and stakeholder organisations is calling for all political parties to respond to the 'Manifesto for Change' set out in the *Obsessive Hope Disorder* Report.

[Click here](#) to view the full media release. [Click here](#) to read the 'Manifesto for Change'.

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National framework for recovery oriented mental health services

The **National framework for recovery oriented mental health services** was launched by Dr Peggy Brown at the TheMHS Conference in Melbourne.

There are four documents:

1. Guide for practitioners and providers (report)
2. Policy and theory (report)
3. Consumer and carer guide (pamphlet)
4. Practitioner guide (pamphlet)

The four documents can be found at: <http://www.ahmac.gov.au/site/home.aspx> in the **Related Links** column.

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bluevoices News — Perspectives: Mental Health & Wellbeing in Australia

To highlight the need for mental health service reform, the Mental Health Council of Australia has released *Perspectives: Mental Health & Wellbeing in Australia*, a collection of articles from Australia's leading mental health sector professionals, including two from *beyondblue*.

[Click here](#) to read more or download a copy of Perspectives: Mental Health & Wellbeing in Australia.

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StigmaWatch Bulletin

So far this year SANE StigmaWatch have worked with national and regional newsrooms, businesses and celebrities to reduce stigma relating to mental illness and encourage responsible reporting of suicide-related issues.

To the end of July we have received 144 StigmaWatch Reports, with 55 per cent trivialising mental illness and 16 per cent irresponsibly reporting on suicide.

SANE Australia has also released a comprehensive report examining the impact stigma has on the lives of people affected with mental illness. [A life without stigma](#) describes some of the

major stigma-reduction initiatives carried out in Australia and overseas, and makes recommendations for future action in Australia towards a life without stigma.

[Click here](#) to view the full bulletin.

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Push to end discrimination in the insurance industry

beyondblue and the Mental Health Council of Australia are stepping up their campaign to end practices in the Australian insurance industry that may discriminate against people with a mental illness. The organisations are urging more potential victims of discrimination to come forward, share their stories and participate in the move to redress this issue. beyondblue CEO Kate Carnell AO said Australians with an experience of mental illness are regularly denied insurance cover, forced to pay higher premiums or have their claim rejected because of their illness.

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In the media

Carers welcome Government's support for Productivity Commission Inquiry into mental health

Carers Australia has joined the Mental Health Council of Australia in welcoming the Government's support for a Productivity Commission Inquiry into the mental health system.

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

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Carers Australia welcomes Coalition announcement on education opportunities for young carers

Carers Australia is very pleased with an announcement by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Tony Abbott, that a Coalition Government would make an initial commitment of \$3 million over three years to fund educational bursaries worth up to \$10,000 for eligible young carers.

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

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Links to current media that may be of interest to carers

- [Resource to boost mental health services](#)
- [Death inquest told of mental health system changes](#)
- [Young people suffering Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder will soon be able to seek free treatment online](#)

- [Mental health – a community issue](#)
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- [Comment: We need to protect new mothers from trauma and suicide](#)
- [Study reveals volunteers lead happier, longer lives](#)
- [Online resource ReachOut.com Professionals focusing on youth mental health](#)
- [Grandparents need time off if they are carers, says new study](#)
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- [Carers and care workers are the best kind of people. So why are they treated so disgracefully?](#)
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- [Greens launch \\$9 billion healthcare plan](#)
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- [Kevin Rudd announces 10 new mental health centres in Reddit forum](#)
- [Mental and substance use disorders collectively cause more disability internationally than other illnesses](#)

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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.

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