



MENTAL HEALTH
**carers
voice**

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

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August 1

E-Bulletin

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Mental Health Carers Voice

The journey of mental health caring — past, present and future

Carers ACT CEO, Dee McGrath and Mental Health Carers Policy Officer, Doris Kordes have assisted in the collaboration of the Obsessive Hope Disorder report. The following is extracted from their contribution.

“2013 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the release of the Report of the NSW Inquiry into Health Services for the Psychiatrically Ill and Developmentally Disabled (the Richmond Report) and the twentieth anniversary of the Report of the National Inquiry into the Human Rights of People with Mental Illness (the Burdekin Report). The Richmond Report provided a blueprint for deinstitutionalisation and the dismantling of the NSW psychiatric hospital system. Asylums were emptied, with many patients transported to next of kin who were largely unprepared and ill-equipped for the responsibilities of the caring role. Ten years on, as outlined in submissions before the Burdekin Inquiry, carers were still struggling with the emotional, financial, and physical impacts of the caring role; the lack of carer supports, including information, education, respite and counselling; and the attitudes of mental health professionals...”

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

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Carer Representation Training

The Mental Health Carers Voice program is providing training for carer representatives and for carers who are interested in becoming representatives. Come along and:

- Learn and/or refresh your representative skills
- Meet and connect with other carer representatives
- Engage with ACT Government policy makers and service providers
- Pick up copies of latest policy resources etc.

Date: Thursday 29 August

Time: 5.00pm – 9.00pm

Location: Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt
A light dinner will be provided.

To register phone Emma on 6296 9952 or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au

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Mental Health Carer Networking & Consulting Forums

A forum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and friends of people living with mental health issues was held on 7 August 2013 at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. The forum attracted 46 participants. The audience heard about the importance of providing culturally safe social and emotional wellbeing services and what services are currently available in the ACT. Participants were also introduced to a new Indigenous service that has commenced operations in Canberra; and learned about free Mental Health First Aid training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples delivered by Indigenous instructors. A comprehensive report will be published and made available through E-Bulletin.

Stigma: A Major Barrier for 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. A carer representative and several service providers will be presenting at this forum.

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: COB 5pm Friday 6 September. Phone Emma on 6296 9952; email mhcarers@carersact.org.au.

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Reconciling the patient's right to confidentiality and the family's need to know

This journal article, written by Mark Furlong and Margaret Leggatt, was recommended to the Mental Health Carers Voice Program by Professor Robert Bland, University of Queensland. The article was published in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* in October 1996.

Abstract

Objective: Persistent difficulties have been identified in relation to confidentiality in mental health settings. The objective of the current investigation was to develop practical options enabling clinicians to negotiate this issue in a manner that is sensitive to families.

Method: A review of the international literature, the current legal and policy settings, and the needs of clients and their families were undertaken. Additional material was drawn from the authors' own practice and advocacy experience. Results: The literature and policies reviewed emphasised the importance of meaningful collaboration between clinicians and families. A close reading of the relevant legislation revealed possibilities for an interpretation of confidentiality that facilitates such collaboration. Options for negotiating the engagement phase which are consistent with meaningful collaboration were then developed.

Conclusion: Rather than assuming that confidentiality is an intransient problem, the authors conclude that dealing with the question of confidentiality sensitively presents clinicians with an opportunity to develop quality relationships with both clients and their families.

Carers ACT has purchased a copy of this article. For more information, contact Doris on 6296 9936 or email doris.kordes@carersact.org.au.

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Carers Corner

Mental Health Commission of Canada releases new carer guidelines

A carer submitted these guidelines to the Mental Health Carers Voice program.

"A loved one's mental health problem or illness often impacts family, friends and supporters. Caring for a person living with a mental illness often leads to emotional, physical, financial and social burdens for caregivers.

That's why the Mental Health Commission of Canada has released *National Guidelines for a*

Comprehensive Service System to Support Family Caregivers of Adults with Mental Health Problems and Illnesses..."

[Click here](#) for a link to the Guidelines.

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Carers ACT

Launch — New carer services in Gungahlin

Carers ACT is excited to launch a new service and new service centre located in Gungahlin (Ngunnawal Neighbourhood Centre). The Mental Health Carers Connection Program will support carers and families residing in North Canberra who are caring for someone with mental illness.

The new Mental Health Carer Connection Program will provide respite, information and referral, carer mingle evenings, social support, peer support, educational opportunities, counselling, advocacy and Young Carer case management. The Ngunnawal Service Centre will enable carers to access a holistic range of service supports.

Mental health carers are invited to the launch of this exciting new service.

Date: Wednesday 4 September

Time: 11.00am

Location: Ngunnawal Neighbourhood Centre, 40 Yarrowonga Street, Ngunnawal

RSVP: 30 August: 6296 9933 or email: alison.elliott@carersact.org.au

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

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Caring for the carers

“As of July 1 this year, the Southern Highlands Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre (SHCRCC) is being managed by Carers ACT to support family carers in the region...”

Carers ACT CEO Dee McGrath was in Bega on Friday 2 August to inform Southern Highland carers about the changes to services.

[Click here](#) for the news article featured in the *Bega District News*. [Click here](#) for a news article about the carers also featured in the *Bega District News*.

Carers ACT has opened an office in Eurobodalla at 71 Campbell Street, Moruya and it is open Monday to Friday. [Click here](#) for media release.

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The Branch Out Café

Now open 5 days per week 8.30am to 1.00pm at 80 Beaurepaire 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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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 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 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

CIT Skills for Carers

CIT Skills for Carers has been successfully providing flexible training for family carers in the ACT since 1995. By carers we mean family and friends of a frail older person or a person living with a disability, chronic illness or mental health issues. These are people involved in an unpaid capacity in the many aspects of supporting someone to live as independently as possible. Training is available through short courses, workshops or on an individual basis. There are no fees for this training. Click [here](#) to view courses beginning in the coming months, such as carers managing their own depression, Supporting someone with memory loss and Mindfulness and relaxation, to name a few. For more information please email CIT Skills for Carers Program at carerskills@cit.edu.au or call 6207 3628.

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Stress less and Live Healthy

What is stress? What are its symptoms and causes? What is the relationship between chronic illness and stress and vice versa?

Come and learn different strategies and techniques to reduce stress and increase your general wellbeing.

Date: Thursday 15 August

Time: 7.00pm – 8.30pm

Location: SHOUT, Building 1, Pearce Community Centre, Collett Place, Pearce
For further information please call the SHOUT office on 6290 1984.

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

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Common Ground Canberra Volunteers needed

Common Ground Canberra needs your help in Canberra between 15 to 18 August for a great event. Please read the attached letters, [We need your volunteer help](#) and [Bed Vigil Project Outline](#), to find why the help is needed then contact any of the below people to volunteer:

Eiren Black on 0406 850 559 or email eirenpmb@gmail.com

Fiona Smith du Toit on 0416 100 804 or email fionasmithdutoit@gmail.com

Vyt Valkaitis on 0419 600 238 or email vyt.vilkaitis@afma.gov.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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Improving legal services for vulnerable people in the ACT

The Law and Justice Foundation of NSW in conjunction with National Legal Aid recently undertook a survey of legal need in Australia — the Legal Australia-Wide (LAW) Survey. Over 20,000 people nation-wide, including 2000 in the ACT, were asked about legal problems they had experienced and how they dealt with them. The survey found that legal problems are widespread with 50% of respondents having experienced one or more legal problems in the previous 12 months. The survey confirmed that:

- legal problems often have adverse impacts on people's lives
- disadvantaged people are particularly vulnerable to legal problems, including substantial and multiple legal problems
- a large proportion of people take no action to resolve their legal problems and consequently achieve poor outcomes
- most people who seek advice about legal problems do not consult legal advisors and resolve their problems outside the formal justice system.

In response to the LAW Survey findings the ACT Legal Assistance Forum (ACTLAF) is holding a symposium with the aim of bringing representatives from the community sector, government agencies and legal service providers together to discuss how services can better connect with vulnerable people who need legal assistance.

Date: Wednesday 28 August
Time: 8.00am – 5.15pm
Location: National Library of Australia, Parkes Place

[Click here](#) to view further information on the symposium. [Click here](#) for the registration form.

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Let's Talk for Suicide Prevention Youth Forum

ACT Health is pleased to invite you to attend the Let's Talk for Suicide Prevention Youth Forum.

Professor De Leo, from the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention, will be the key note speaker at the forum and will focus on suicide risk factors for young people.

Issues to be covered include:

- reading warning signs;
- discussing suicide with young people;
- help seeking; and
- self-care.

Date: Monday 2 September
Time: 7.00pm – 9.00pm
Location: Music Auditorium, Narrabundah College, Jerrabomberra Avenue, Kingston

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

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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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Enhanced Service Offer Grants

Round two will be open from 30 September to 8 November 2013.

Applications can be made in the following ways:

- online at www.act.gov.au/enhancedserviceoffer
- paper form – download and complete the form available at www.act.gov.au/enhancedserviceoffer
- by requesting a paper application from the Disability ACT Information Service on 6207 1086 or DisabilityACT@act.gov.au

Please submit paper applications either:

By post:

Enhanced Service Offer
Contracts and Grants Unit
Community Services Directorate
GPO Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2601

In person to:

The concierge
Ground Floor, Central Access Point
Housing and Community Services
Nature Conservation House
153 Emu Bank
BELCONNEN

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National & International News and Research

Invisible Care

Carers Victoria released the *Invisible Care: Access to Carer Payment and Carer Allowance by Victorian carers of a person with a mental illness* report.

This comprehensive report follows a study into access to Carer Payment and Carer Allowance by carers of a person with a mental illness. The report provides detailed analysis of the experiences of carers and their patterns of access to these important payments. *Invisible Care* goes on to develop recommendations that are relevant to Federal and Victorian government departments.

[Click here](#) to see the full report.

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Mental Health off the Political Radar

The Mental Health Council of Australia has called on the entire community to get behind mental health reform, now that it has dropped from the political election agenda.

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

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Misunderstood and Under Supported: the plight of people with a mental illness and their carers

Two important reports highlighting the continuing failure of governments and their agencies in tailoring appropriate responses to Australia's 5 million people suffering from mental illness, and the families and friends who care for them, were released on 2 August.

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

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SANE Australia calls on all political parties: 'Don't drop the ball on mental health at this year's election'

As Australia's political parties embark on their election campaigns, national mental health charity SANE Australia says that while important progress has been made in mental health reform, Australia still has a long way to go.

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

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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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Early intervention needed on mental health and crime

People with mental health disorders are up to nine times more likely to end up in prison and early intervention could save millions of dollars, a new report shows.

The report, "People with mental health disorders and cognitive impairment in the criminal justice system," released by the Australian Human Rights Commission shows early intervention for people with mental health disorders could save millions.

[Click here](#) to view the article featured in Medical Xpress online. [Click here](#) to read the report by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

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Smoke Free Environment Newsletter

Update July 2013, Canberra Hospital and Health Services. Report from the monitoring/review committee.

[Click here](#) to view the newsletter.

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Contributing Life Conversations

The National Mental Health Commission made a commitment last year to ensure that people always have a voice and remain at the centre of decision-making about the services that impact on them. **From Monday 22 July to Sunday 11 August**, the Commission is encouraging people to meet in homes, workplaces, café's, parks and public spaces around Australia to have 'Contributing Life Conversations'.

These conversations are about sharing what *A Contributing Life* means to you and those close to you, and discussing what gives each of our lives meaning and purpose. They are based on four

simple questions, designed to take less than an hour.

This initiative is part of the Commissions' *National Contributing Life Project*, and will help build a rounded picture of people's lives and experiences.

[Click here](#) for more information on how you can be part of this initiative. [Click here](#) to see the brochure.

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Mental Health Services (TheMHS) 2013 Conference

The annual TheMHS Conference will be held in Melbourne, 20 to 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](#). To register on line, [click here](#)

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In the media

Links to current media that may be of interest to carers

- [Movember moustache growers help boost mental health](#)
- [Young men need to talk health](#)
- [Major review to prompt amendments on mental health loophole as a means of avoiding jail](#)
- [Dementia resource launched](#)
- [Police to tackle mental health](#)
- [SA mental incompetence laws may change](#)
- [NSW mental health services streamlined](#)
- [No consultation on mental health unit](#)
- [Patrick McGorry hits out at Australia's 'beleaguered, fragmented' mental health system](#)
- [Call for urgent change to Govt Employment Services](#)
- [Liberals support fast-tracking mental health centre](#)
- [Still hoping for a change](#)
- [Study on transgender mental health looking for participants](#)
- [Change coming for Landcare Australia](#)

- [Political candidates face the Gippsland Carers Forum in Morwell](#)
- [Becoming a carer shouldn't mean the end of your career](#)
- [Life expectancy for people with mental illness the same as 30 years ago: report](#)
- [Mental health report attacks lack of progress on life expectancy](#)
- [Plea for Ballarat Base Hospital to create outdoor smoking area for patients](#)
- [Funding boost for mental health research](#)
- [South Australian Government to cut health services](#)
- [Tragedy of tormented teenagers – mental illness hits one in four](#)
- [Clinicians give thoughts on patient evaluation](#)
- [Rose Cox, 13 from Strathfield, was a carer for her mum and dad at just eight-years-old](#)
- ['Never operational' Get Up! Sheikh-linked subsidiary has active website](#)
- [Rudd pledges \\$30m to train educators, trainers and carers](#)

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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