



ACT Government Budget Consultation 2014-15

Response

October 2013

Carers ACT acknowledges that modern day Canberra has been built on the traditional lands of the Ngunnawal people. We offer our respects to their Elders past and present, and celebrate the Ngunnawal people's living culture and valuable contribution to the ACT community.

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Who is Carers ACT?

Carers ACT is a non-profit, community-based, incorporated association and registered charity dedicated to improving the lives of the estimated 43,000 carers living in the Australian Capital Territory.

These carers provide ongoing unpaid care for people with disabilities, mental illness, chronic conditions, who have palliative care needs, or who are aged and frail. Carers ACT currently provides direct support to around 8000 families through our counselling, information, respite support, education, social support and case coordination services. We continue to meet national accreditation standards for delivery of our services to carers at a high level.

Carers ACT has a constitutional mandate to represent the voices of carers to government and the wider community. We actively consult with a wide diversity of caring families on an ongoing basis to enable improved understanding of their needs, and enable better inclusion for them and the people they care for. Policy work in consultation, research and representation is kept separate from service delivery to ensure that the privacy of individual service recipients is respected. All carer participation in policy work is voluntary.

Carers ACT is a member of the National Network of Carers Associations, and works actively with other States and Territories to share knowledge and facilitate improved health and wellbeing outcomes for caring families.

1. Introduction and Summary of Recommendations

Carers ACT welcomes this opportunity to respond to the ACT Government's 2014-15 Budget consultation.

Our response acknowledges the major aged and disability care reform implementation and their impact on carers and the people they care for, including the changed funding arrangements between the ACT and Australian Governments because of these reforms; and the ACT Government's approach to the 2014-15 Budget and its continued measured spending to ensure that it can continue to fund high quality services and infrastructure in the ACT.¹

The Carers ACT 2014-15 ACT Budget response focuses on three strategic priorities for carers and the people they support. These include:

- Increased investment and access to supported accommodation for people with disability and people with mental illness
- Ongoing investment in carer support services
- Support for mental health carers and other Canberrans interacting with the ACT's coronial system.

Our recommendations reflect key issues in the Carers ACT 2012 Election Campaign *What Carers Want!*,² our 2012-15 Strategic Plan,³ and our ongoing consultation with carers.

Recommendation 1

Carers ACT recommends that the ACT Government continues to support policy initiatives to increase the provision of supported living arrangements including:

- a. Investment of \$250,000 to commission an independent economic and social analysis of models of supported accommodation for the ACT
- b. Continuation, and resourcing, of the Principle Based Supported Accommodation Committee
- c. Further investment to assist individuals, families and organisations to develop innovative supported accommodation options which offer genuine quality of life, with meaningful activities and appropriate care levels to better meet the needs of people with disability and mental illness
- d. Exploration of the feasibility, required mechanisms and cost benefits to transfer ACT Government group homes to individuals and families
- e. Provision of programs to support carers and their families plan for transition to supported accommodation, including legal and financial planning.

¹ ACT Government (2013) Budget Consultation 2014-15: A budget overview prepared for the 2014-15 budget consultation process.

² Carers ACT (2012a) *What Carers Want! Carers ACT 2012 Election Campaign*, August 2012.

³ Carers ACT (2012b) 2012-15 Strategic Plan, September 2012.

Recommendation 2

Carers ACT recommends that the ACT Government invests in carers health and wellbeing and their capacity to sustain their caring role, including:

- a. Ongoing funding of the ACT Carers Advocacy Program to support carers and build their capacity to be self-advocates
- b. Ongoing funding of specific programs to support Young Carers
- c. Ongoing funding of specific programs to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers and carers of people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Recommendation 3

Carers ACT urges the ACT Government to strongly advocate through relevant national advisory bodies for the inclusion of the rights of carers to receive services (including appropriate respite and health assessments) from ageing, disability and mental health services to meet their own needs so they can sustain their caring role and have the same choice as people in the ACT who are not carers to participate in the workforce and other activities.

Recommendation 4

Carers ACT recommends that the ACT Government invest in carer and family transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, similar to the newly-announced Victorian *Connected Carers Program*.

Recommendation 5

Carers ACT recommends that the ACT Government increases resourcing for counselling and psychological support services for families involved in coronial inquiries, including the promotion of these services and other relevant information in print form and on the ACT Coroners Court website.

2. Strategic Budget Priority One: Increased investment and access to supported accommodation for people with disability and people with mental illness

Improve planning for more innovative models of supported living options and more places and community support for people with disabilities and people with mental illness and their carers. (Carers ACT 2012-15 Strategic Plan)³

Develop better resources for carers and their families to plan transition of people with disability or mental illness to their own homes, including essential support for legal and financial planning. (Carers ACT 2012-15 Strategic Plan)³

Increase supported accommodation options for people with mental illness that recognise and allow for the factors that limit their ability to sustain secure accommodation. (What Carers Want!)²

Carers ACT hosted the Supported Living Options Summit in 2012, with the support of the ACT Government and other sector organisations. The summit report recommended the urgency to meet supported accommodation needs of people with disability or mental illness. It recommended that the

ACT Government works collaboratively or in partnership with community organisations, philanthropic organisations and families to develop innovative supported accommodation models.⁴

Carers ACT acknowledges the ACT Government's response to the identified need to improve planning and supply of innovative models of supported living options for people with disabilities and mental illness. It established a Principle Based Supported Accommodation Committee (PBSAC), and the 2013-14 ACT Budget included funding commitments to increase supported accommodation options in the ACT.

Despite these initiatives, access to appropriate supported accommodation continues to be a priority for Carers ACT and ACT carers. The concern about supported accommodation is often framed as a fear about the future when the carer or family could no longer maintain their caring role. Carers stress the need for supported accommodation options to be appropriate to individual needs and preferences.⁵

It is important that the PBSAC continues and has a focus on developing a planning blueprint (preferably based upon the outcomes of Carers ACT's proposed economic and social analysis review of supported accommodation) to develop an alternative range of supported living models to better meet current and future demand in the ACT. The proposed analysis also includes an economic analysis of the benefits of carers improved opportunity for workforce participation because of increased access to support accommodation.⁶

Although the ACT Greens committed \$250,000 for the support of this economic and social analysis in its 2012 election campaign it was not funded in the 2013-14 ACT Budget.

Carers ACT believes that this analysis will provide strategic information to assist in meeting the ACT's supported accommodation needs in a long term and sustainable way with appropriate consideration of how it will interact with and complement the housing, community infrastructure and accommodation support through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The NDIS does not explicitly include provision of accommodation, but NDIS Rules: *Supports for Participants* under Rule 7.19 states the NDIS will be responsible for:

- (a) supports to assist a person with disability to live independently in the community, including by building their capacity to maintain a tenancy, and support for appropriate behaviour management; and
- (b) home modifications for accessibility for a person in private dwellings; and
- (c) home modifications for accessibility for a person in legacy public and community housing dwellings on a case-by-case basis but not to the extent that it would compromise the

⁴ Carers ACT (2012c) Carers Summit on Supported Living Options Final Report, March 2012.

⁵ Carers ACT (2012d) *Carers ACT Annual Service Evaluation 2011-12*, October 2012.

⁶ For further information about the proposed economic analysis see Carers ACT Submission to the Budget 2012-2013 ACT Government accessible at <http://www.carersact.org.au/Assets/Files/BUDGETSUBMISSION2012.pdf> and Carers ACT Supported Living Options Summit Final Report accessible at <http://www.carersact.org.au/Assets/Files/Final%20Carers%20Summit%20Report%20April%202012.pdf>

responsibility of housing authorities to develop, maintain and refurbish stock that meets the needs of people with disability; and
(d) user costs of capital in some situations where a person requires an integrated housing and support model and the cost of the accommodation component exceeds a reasonable contribution from individuals.⁷

Feedback from a state Carers Association with an NDIS launch site indicates that some people who anticipated that their NDIS package would include supported accommodation were disappointed to discover this was not the situation.

The ACT Government is the largest single provider of supported accommodation (particularly for people with high care needs) in the ACT,⁸ and we believe that the implementation of the ACT NDIS launch site in July 2014 is an important opportunity for the ACT Government to support innovative accommodation solutions for people with disability and mental illness. In 2010-11, accommodation was the highest National Disability Agreement expenditure by the ACT Government at 64.5 per cent of the total expenditure.⁹

The ACT Government's proposed move away from the provision of both accommodation and respite services by inviting organisations to tender to deliver these services, and the proposed handing back of group homes (both disability and mental health) to ACT Housing and Community Services presents a unique chance for the ACT Government to assist individuals, carers and families to examine the cost and social benefits to utilise these homes for accommodation and to work with families to find a suitable accommodation solution.

Outcomes from the 2012 Supported Living Summit as well as Carers ACT's discussions with caring families indicate that many would contribute financially to the cost of appropriate supported accommodation to invest in certainty for the future of their family member with a disability or mental illness. Some are considering or have undertaken innovative solutions such as 'pooling' individual support packages and other income to build, purchase or lease single accommodation or a congregate group home.

In tandem with the need for supported accommodation, carers and families indicated they require planned transition to supported accommodation so that the carer and family are better placed to support individuals make this transition. This includes:

- Support with legal and financial planning – including wills and estate planning, special disability or family trusts, contracts for family property management, and planning ongoing representation arrangements for the person with a disability.

⁷ Australian Government (2013) *National Disability Insurance Scheme Rules – Supports for participants*, February 2013.

⁸ This is primarily supplied through group homes that provide congregate living. Also see reference 9. below.

⁹ Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (2012) Report on Government Services, January 2012. Accessible at <http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/rogs/2012>

Carers ACT recommends that investment in supported living arrangements for people with disability or mental illness a key component of the 2014-15 ACT Budget.

Recommendation 1

Carers ACT recommends that the ACT Government continues to support policy initiatives to increase the provision of supported living arrangements including:

- a. Investment of \$250,000 to commission an independent economic and social analysis of models of supported accommodation for the ACT
- b. Continuation, and resourcing, of the Principle Based Supported Accommodation Committee
- c. Further investment to assist individuals, families and organisations to develop innovative supported accommodation options which offer genuine quality of life, with meaningful activities and appropriate care levels to better meet the needs of people with disability and mental illness
- d. Exploration of the feasibility, required mechanisms and cost benefits to transfer ACT Government group homes to individuals and families
- e. Provision of programs to support carers and their families plan for transition to supported accommodation, including legal and financial planning.

3. Strategic Budget Priority Two: Ongoing investment in carer support services

Increase the availability of adequate planned respite so that carers have more opportunities to participate in the workforce and activities that reduce their social isolation. (Carers ACT 2012-15 Strategic Plan)³

We will support carers throughout the health reforms and keep them informed of changes that impact on them and how to access services they need. (Carers ACT 2012-15 Strategic Plan)³

Provide training and resources for people with a disability, their carer and family to make informed choices about changes to service delivery, including individually funded care packages, and adequate advocacy services for carers. (What Carers Want!)²

There are 43,000 family carers in the ACT who support loved ones who may have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness or who are frail aged. Carers are diverse and include young carers, Indigenous carers, ageing carers and carers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Carers are most likely to care for their spouse or partner (45%), a parent (23%), or a child (22%).¹⁰

¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) *Caring in the community* 2009, December 2011.

Overwhelmingly, families carry the caring responsibility in the community, providing support and assistance to their family members or friends. Nearly 90 per cent of carers of people with disability live with the person they care for. The majority of these carers are aged 25 to 64 years.¹¹

Because of their caring role carers are also less likely to be in the paid workforce than those who are not carers (40% of primary carers are employed compared to 66% of the population who are not carers).¹² This means carers and their families are often some of the poorest families in Australia.

In recognition of the role of carers who underpin aged, disability and mental health care the ACT Government introduced a Charter for Canberra's Carers in 2011. Linked to the National Carer Strategy, this charter reflects an increased recognition of the important contribution that carers make to our community. Carers ACT and carers saw this as a commitment by the ACT Government to ensure their needs would be considered by service providers and government agencies.

With the implementation of *Living Longer, Living Better* (national aged care reform framework), the National Disability Insurance Scheme and mental health reform there is now uncertainty about the availability, and level of carer support currently provided by the ACT and Australian Government funded carer services – including respite, social support, advocacy, and information and training.

The Productivity Commission indicated in the final report of its Inquiry into Disability Care and Support that:

No scheme is likely to fund the full cost of this care, so natural supports will remain an important part of the care and support response. But informal care arrangements need to move to a more equitable and sustainable footing. The pressure on carers should be lessened by more and better services ... The support provided by families would be considered in assessments, and where appropriate, carers also assessed and given additional supports.¹³

Any reduction in available supports to help carers maintain their caring role is likely to increase the quality of life gap between carers and non carers and compromise their capacity to continue their caring role.

While the commencement of the ACT NDIS launch site in July 2014 is welcomed by carers and people with disability and the wider community, Carers ACT is concerned that:

- only a small number of eligible clients or their carers have experience with individual funding packages will be 'NDIS ready'

¹¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2011) *2010–11 Disability Services National Minimum Data Set*

¹² Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) *ibid*

¹³ Productivity Commission (2011) *Final Report of the Inquiry into Disability support and care*, August 2011. Accessible at http://www.pc.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/111270/disability-support-volume1.pdf

- carers and families are unlikely to receive sufficient training to prepare them for the NDIS by July 2014 – this includes awareness of the different language being used by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)
- the workforce capacity may not meet the expected demand for services
- providers may not have the capacity to deliver quality services within NDIA’s listed price schedule that provide choice for people
- carer access to respite may be reduced if respite is incorporated into the NDIS
- there is uncertainty about carer assessment, even though the Productivity Commission recommended an assessment when carers requested one, and that carer needs were to be considered in the client’s assessment
- early interventions services for children, such as the *Better Start for Children with Disability* and *Helping Children with Autism* initiatives, need to be retained so children continue to have the same life chances
- the ‘no disadvantage’ principle under-pinning the NDIS will not be the reality for some clients and their carers and families
- there is no provision for ‘Tier 2’ clients who are ineligible for ‘Tier 3’ services, and it is uncertain whether sufficient funding is available to provide the current service level that they and their carers receive
- there is no advocacy service specific to individual carers needs under the NDIS.

Some of the issues listed above will also be concerns of carers, people with disability or mental illness, organisations and the ACT Government. Amendments to the NDIS framework may arise from the experiences of the operational launch sites, for example: whether the NDIA listed price schedule covers the cost of NDIS service providers and their ability to provide quality services to NDIS participants.

The need for flexibility in the delivery of the NDIS was identified during NSW Government’s second reading of its *National Disability Insurance Scheme (NSW Enabling) Bill 2013*, and evaluation from the NDIS launch sites will inform the ACT NDIS launch site operation when it begins in July 2014 so some of our concerns may be addressed.

To assist carers and families through the early implementation of the NDIS, the Victorian Government announced in October 2013 it will invest \$200,000 in a new *Connected Carers Program*. The program will be jointly coordinated by Carers Victoria and Children with Disability. It will provide training and support specifically for family carers to transition smoothly to new support arrangements under the NDIS. The Victorian NDIS launch site commenced in Barwon in July this year.¹⁴

Two priority areas Carers ACT has identified for ongoing ACT Government support are:

¹⁴ Carers Victoria (2013) *Coalition announces more support for carers* news item. Accessible at <http://www.carersvictoria.org.au/news/article/4635/coalition-announces-more-support-for-carers> and Premier of Victoria website: Accessible at <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/8088-coalition-announces-more-support-for-carers.html>

Respite

Carer respite services are an important element of support for carers. Adequate access to respite services helps carers to participate in activities that most non carers take for granted, such as having time to look after their own needs, doing things with friends and other family members, and being able to continue in or enter the workforce.

This is what the Productivity Commission in its final report into the inquiry into Disability Care and Support said:

Respite — to provide a short-term and time-limited break for people with disabilities, families and other voluntary carers of people with a disability. These services are designed to assist in supporting and maintaining the primary care giving relationship, while providing a positive experience for the person with a disability.¹⁵

Although the anticipated increased level of support services to eligible clients through the NDIS is expected to relieve some of the caring responsibilities for carers and families, ACT Government information available to Carers ACT indicates that flexible and diverse respite services remain one of the highest identified needs by carers to be provided through the NDIS.

Feedback from one of the NDIS launch sites indicates there are reported instances from launch sites that the carer's wish for respite to be part of the NDIS client's support package is not considered, or is considered unnecessary by the client.¹⁶

This finding is similar to the *Carers ACT 2011-12 Annual Service Evaluation* that revealed respite (including residential respite) was Carers ACT's second most accessed service (37%) after information provision (43%). Carers viewed respite as an essential support in their caring role, with respite services described as central to their ability to maintain their own health and wellbeing, workforce engagement, social connection and ability to maintain their caring role.¹⁷

Respite for carers of older people will be included in *Living Longer, Living Better's* community care packages, such as those provided by the Home Care Packages Program, from July 2015.¹⁸ Again, this provides uncertainty for carers and organisations, such as Carers ACT and the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres (CRCC) that provide respite services (residential and centre-based). While the CRCC¹⁹ is funded by the Australian Government, the ACT Government funds Home and Community Care

¹⁵ Productivity Commission (2011) *ibid*

¹⁶ Information provided to Carers ACT by another Carers Association that there was sensitivity expressed by the client that their carer would want a break for them, October 2013.

¹⁷ Carers ACT (2012d) *ibid*

¹⁸ Australian Department of Health *Living Longer, Living Better* website: Accessible at <http://www.livinglongerlivingbetter.gov.au/>

¹⁹ Australian Government funding for the CRCC is available until July 2014. *Under Living Longer, Living Better* Carer Support Centres will be established and a tender process is being established. However, there is still uncertainty when the tenders will be called or the new Carer Support Centres established.

centre-based respite. The latter includes support for Young Carers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Carers, and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Carers.

Under the National Disability Agreement in 2010-11 the ACT Government respite expenditure was 9.9 per cent of its total annual expenditure.²⁰

Carer Advocacy

Carers ACT coordinates the Carer Advocacy Program funded by the ACT Government. During 2012-13 the program provided advocacy support and referrals to services for carers, the person they supported and their families. The program has developed the skills and confidence of many carers to become self-advocates. The majority of carers were caring for a person with mental illness, a disability or who was frail aged. Advocacy support provided to carers related to their own needs, such as employment issues, as well as the person they cared for. The program is funded to July 2014.

The impact on ACT carers with the implementation of national aged care and disability reforms is still to be gauged. Feedback to Carers ACT from one NDIS launch site indicates that the biggest issue for carers and families being assessed for an NDIS support package is that the service system is still not adequately equipped to offer them choice and control – a key principle of the NDIS.

Under the NDIS advocacy services for participants or clients will be available through the National Disability Advocacy Program, and primarily relate to legal review and representation, and support to access mainstream and community services. There is no specific provision for advocacy for carers' own needs.²¹

Carers ACT strongly recommends that the ACT Government continues its investment in supporting ACT carers in line with the objectives of *Caring for Carers: The ACT Carers' Charter* including:

- Carers are supported to sustain their caring role.
- Carers' diverse needs are acknowledged and appropriate supports provided.
- Carers share a quality of life that is in accordance with community standards.²²

Recommendation 2

Carers ACT recommends that the ACT Government invests in carers health and wellbeing and their capacity to sustain their caring role, including:

- a. Ongoing funding of the ACT Carer Advocacy Program to support carers and build their capacity to be self-advocates

²⁰ Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (2012)

²¹ National Disability Insurance Scheme website: Accessible at www.ndis.gov.au

²² Disability ACT (2011) *Caring for Carers: The ACT Carers' Charter*. Accessible at http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/263102/ACT_Carers_Charter_Fact_sheet.pdf

- b. Ongoing funding of specific programs to support Young Carers programs
- c. Ongoing funding of specific programs to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers and carers of people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

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Carers ACT recommends that the ACT Government invests in carer and family transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, similar to the newly-announced Victorian *Connected Carers Program*.

Recommendation 4

Carers ACT urges the ACT Government to strongly advocate through relevant national advisory bodies for the inclusion of the rights of carers to receive services (including appropriate respite and health assessments) from ageing, disability and mental health services to meet their own needs so they can sustain their caring role and have the same choice as people in the ACT who are not carers to participate in the workforce and other activities.

4. Strategic Priority Three: Support for mental health carers and other Canberrans interacting with the ACT's coronial system

Provide evidence based advice to government on services that best meet carers needs. (Carers ACT 2012-15 Strategic Plan)³

Carers ACT provides services and supports to carers of people with mental illness, and we are aware that for carers and families impacted by the sudden death of a loved one whose death is subject to a coronial inquiry, coming to terms with the death may be hampered by interactions with an unfamiliar and complex legal system. A lack of knowledge and preparation for what may be expected during a coronial inquest is confusing and distressing for many bereaved families.

Many carers have sought assistance from Carers ACT to help them cope with resultant distress from their coronial involvement, often because of suicide of the person they support. This was compounded for families who were not referred to, or did not receive, counselling services.

The story below by an ACT carer is only one of several stories of carers' experience with the ACT coronial process.

Mental Health Carer's Experience with an ACT Coronial Inquest

When Jane's* family member died from natural causes, the death was investigated by the ACT Coroner because her relative had been on a psychiatric treatment order at the time of death. Jane was not informed by hospital staff that the death would be subject to a coronial inquest. She found out almost 48 hours later, when she was phoned by the police and told that she needed to identify the body. This is despite the fact that Jane had already seen her relative's body at the hospital, after she had been asked to collect the person's belongings while the family member was still lying on the bed.

The inquest went on for months. Jane and her family found it a very upsetting experience because they heard the police statement on how their relative died, and what interventions were taken to save the relative. She had not been prepared for this, as her family had received no information on what would happen during the inquest.

At no time were Jane and her family referred to any counselling service. This is despite Jane was interviewed by police officers for 2-3 hours and asked questions relating to the family member's life from early days leading up to death. The police did not explain why they needed such comprehensive information.

The inquest went on for months. Jane and her family found it a very upsetting experience because they heard the police statement on how their relative died, and what interventions were taken to save the relative. She had not been prepared for this, as her family had received no information on what would happen during the inquest.

At no time were Jane and her family referred to any counselling service. This is despite the invasive and re-traumatising procedures that they were subjected to. Jane believes it would have been helpful to have counselling offered prior to and after the police interview; and prior to and at key points during the inquest.

*Jane is not the carer's real name.

The Australian Inquest Alliance (the Alliance) was formed in response to similar experiences by families and individuals around Australia. The Alliance's report, *Saving lives by joining up justice: Why Australia needs coronial reform and how to achieve it*, observes that the coronial process can be a difficult and harrowing process for families, relating to a range of factors including:

- Lack of clarity on the coronial process
- Length of time: *In 2011 no state or territory reached the national standard for acceptable backlog of cases. It can take five years before a reported death results in coronial findings, and sometimes up to eight years* (p. 19)
- Financial worries relating to legal representation and/or the requirement that a coroner's finding must be finalised before insurance or superannuation payments can be approved
- Adequacy and appropriateness of support services, and the impact this has on emotional distress and re-traumatisation. The Report identifies the need for *Provision of quality, accessible, and culturally and spiritually appropriate support and counselling services for families* (p. 49)
- Cultural and spiritual considerations regarding the body of the deceased person.²³

²³ The Australian Inquest Alliance (the Alliance) comprising organisations and individuals across Australia, including community legal centres, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, advocates, and researchers, has developed the Australian Coronial Reform Project. An outcome of the Project is the publication: *Saving lives by joining up justice. Why Australia needs coronial reform and how to achieve it*. Issues Paper, March 2013, published by the Federation of Community Legal Centres (Victoria) Inc, on behalf of the Alliance. This Report outlines why national coronial reform is needed and provides a number of recommendations.

In addition, Carers ACT notes that apart from the brochure *Information about the Coroners Court and the Death of a Relative or Friend* there is no other information on the ACT Coroner's Court website that prepares families for what can be expected during a coronial inquiry. This includes lack of information about:

- Counselling services
- Legal representation and related costs*
- Culturally appropriate handling of the body and funeral arrangements
- Translation and Interpreter services.²⁴

(*Carers ACT is aware that the unexpected high legal costs incurred because of the coronial process creates financial stress for many carers and their families.)

Carers ACT recommends that the ACT Government resources appropriate counselling services for people affected by their involvement in coronial inquiries and, additionally, develops an information pack that is provided to families at the time when they are notified that the death is required to be investigated through a coronial inquest.

Recommendation 5

Carers ACT recommends that the ACT Government increases resourcing for counselling and psychological support services for families involved in coronial inquiries, including the promotion of these services and other relevant information in print form and on the ACT Coroners Court website.

²⁴ ACT Government Magistrate Court: Accessible at: <http://www.courts.act.gov.au/magistrates/page/view/595>