



24 January 2013

E-Bulletin

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Mental Health Carers Voice recent news and announcements

Report from the Mental Health Carers Voice Policy Officer

Welcome to the first E-Bulletin for 2013!

It's that time of year, with New Year's resolutions fresh on our mind, when new ideas and proposed improvements may also filter into workplace planning. For example, Mental Health Carers Voice program staff are currently reflecting on ways in which we can improve the program in the year that lies ahead. With this in mind, I would like to invite you to complete the *Mental Health Carers Voice Program Survey*, which may be accessed [here](#). Whoever you are, whatever your role in the mental health sector, if you are an E-Bulletin subscriber your feedback is important to us and will inform this program's ongoing quality improvements, so please take a few moments to complete the survey.

The closing date for submitting the survey is **Thursday 21 February**. A report on the survey results will be distributed via E-Bulletin during March 2013. Surveys may be emailed to mhcarers@carersact.org.au or posted to Carers ACT, Attention: Doris Kordes, 80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt ACT 2615. Please give Doris a call on 6296 9900, or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au if you have any questions about the survey.

One of our long-standing carers has written for the recently established *Carers' Corner* (see page 3). I encourage you to read Mary's piece of writing on supported accommodation, one of the three key issues that keeps carers awake at night (according to Carers ACT 2012 client survey).

A recent Treasury publication, *Report of the Advisory Panel on the Economic Potential of Senior Australians*, includes some very interesting chapters on life-long learning and healthy ageing, and how to 'turn grey into gold'. The Report may be accessed [here](#).

Mental Health Carers Networking & Consulting Forums

The first three forums for 2013 focus on issues that are very relevant for mental health carers:

Medicines and Mental Health Carers

A panel of guest speakers will present on issues relating to the safety and use of medicines and carer issues. The purpose of this forum is to provide mental health carers with information and resources, including clarity around when they may become involved in issues relating to medications, and also appropriate strategies that support medication compliance and safe use of medicines.

In addition, the newly appointed ACT carer representative on the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum, Janet Milford, will be introduced to participants at this Forum, and will be available to talk to carers.

DATE: Wednesday 27 February 2013

TIME: 12noon – 2:00pm

LOCATION: Riley Hall, Pilgrim House Conference Centre, 69 Northbourne Avenue, Civic

COST: Free. Lunch will be provided

RSVP: Ph Rosie or Doris on 6296 9900; or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au.

Second Exposure Draft, Mental Health (Treatment & Care) Act - APRIL

The Second Exposure Draft of the Mental Health (Treatment & Care) Act will be available for comment from late March 2013, for a period of six weeks. Carers ACT will be hosting a consultation with mental health carers on the Second Exposure Draft. The date and venue for this Forum, list of guest speakers, etc will be confirmed in March.

Navigating the Mental Health System - MAY

Knowledge about how to navigate the mental health system is a huge issue for people who have just entered the 'system', but also for those people who may be unaware of the range of services and supports that are available for people living in Canberra. A panel of key organisations, and consumer and carer representatives will share information and provide resources. The date and venue for this Forum, list of guest speakers, etc will be confirmed in April.

VACANCIES - Mental Health Carer Representative Positions

Mental health carers are invited to consider nominating for a carer representative position, through the Mental Health Carers Voice program, on the following committees and working groups:

Health: Division of Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol & Drug Services (MHJHADS)

- Risk Management
- Smoke-Free Evaluation Working group *and* Smoke-Free Working Group (Community)
- MHAGIC (Mental Health Assessment Generation Information Collection) Advisory Committee

MHJHADS Redesign Projects

- Alexander Maconochie Centre Medication Management
- Steering Committee for the redesign projects

Housing and Community Services ACT

- Housing & Supported Accommodation Initiative/Housing & Recovery Initiative Committee

Community Sector

- Mental Health Community Coalition ACT: Peer Workforce Steering Committee.

If you wish to find out more information about the above committees/working groups, contact Doris Kordes on 6299 9900 or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au. For information about becoming a carer representative, visit the Mental Health Carers Voice website at www.carersvoice.com.au and/or give Doris a call.

If you are interested in participating, but would prefer to be a little less engaged, there are vacancies for alternate representatives for various committees. The alternate representative attends meetings when the carer representative cannot attend. If you would like to access the current list of committees please click [here](#).

Carers' Corner: Mary's Story

I very much appreciate the opportunity to contribute to a Carers' Column in the excellent fortnightly Mental Health Carers Voice E-Bulletin.

I am writing on a topic that must be of great concern to many parents like me who have a seriously mentally ill adult son or daughter.

There is a great emphasis these days on 'recovery', 'independent living', 'moving on', etc. Wonderful if it can be achieved; but as many of us know that is not possible for everyone. The scientific literature tells us that 25-35% of those suffering from chronic schizophrenia will not recover sufficiently to be capable of truly independent living. These statistics are for schizophrenia alone without taking into account bipolar disorder or other major mental illnesses.

Many of our sons and daughters are deemed to be coping on their own, although in fact they are receiving a great deal of practical support usually from parents who provide meals, and possibly do cleaning, laundry, shopping etc.

I wonder: how many of you are caring in this way? I am sure there is no need to ask whether, like me, you are deeply concerned about the future. Who will provide this support when we are no longer able to?

Over the more than 25 years that my son has been ill, he struggled to survive on his own in flats by himself for over 12 years but just could not cope.

He is now living in the only facility in the ACT where meals are provided and where he doesn't have to move on after a limited period as in other places. However, it is in a most unsuitable environment, Ainslie Village. Although the Hostel is in a separate building and the staff do what they can, nevertheless among the several hundred residents of the main village, there is a lot of drug taking and dealing and consequent predatory behaviour towards residents of the Hostel. Not a good environment for anyone, let alone the mentally ill trying to manage their mental health. Surely we can do better than this for the very vulnerable in our society?

Over the years I have talked with many professional people in the field and they all agree that there needs to be a radical change in the attitude to the question of supported accommodation of those who decide policy in this area.

I hope the day will come when those disabled by mental illness will have a better place to live with adequate support. I would suggest that we need a complex similar to hostels provided for the elderly:

- each resident having a small unit to keep clean and tidy and, if necessary, with the support from staff
- each unit could be accessed through residents' own doors
- communal living space where people could participate in a range of activities
- meals would be prepared by staff with assistance by residents
- mental health trained staff would be available for residents
- staff would be vigilant and arrange general medical and dental appointments when needed
- transportation to medical appointments, etc would be provided.

Mental health carers are invited to respond to Mary's story, and/or to submit articles for Carers' Corner. Please contact Doris Kordes by phone, on 6296 9900, or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au.

Carers ACT News

NDIS Focus Group held by Carers ACT

A focus group for carers was held on Thursday 17 January 2013 on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The purpose of the focus group was to provide feedback to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) on the views of carers about how services should be provided under the NDIS. In particular, carers were asked for advice on the options for service provision described in COAG's Regulation Impact Statement (RIS). Information about the RIS may be accessed [here](#).

What is a RIS?

The NDIS RIS describes how services and supports will be delivered through the NDIS. The COAG suggested four options for providing services under the NDIS and has asked for feedback on which of the four options the community would prefer. The Options range from Option 1 which is only a limited change to current arrangements through to Option 4 which would allow a participant in the NDIS to purchase services widely.

The Focus Group discussion indicated that there was still a lot of uncertainty about how services will be delivered under the NDIS, and that Option 4 which is the most open market option for services was considered too risky at this stage. The Group acknowledged change from the existing arrangements however was needed and that the expansion of choice of services and providers was welcome as long as some regulation and controls remained to ensure no loss of existing services. Option 2 which proposes an individual support package for the participant to purchase services to providers that are able to meet regulatory standards was preferred by some of the Group.

If you would like to learn more about the NDIS, including eligibility and supports, the NDIS Taskforce Communications Advisor from ACT Government has prepared this [Fact Sheet](#).

ON COURSE FOR CARERS: Carers ACT — The Users Manual

All about us – handouts, Q&A with staff, and your feedback. Everything you ever wanted to know about Carers ACT but were too afraid to ask!

DATE: Thursday 7 February 2013

TIME: 10:00am – 12:00pm

LOCATION: The Carers Hub, Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt.

Day Trip to the Royal Canberra Show

Come and join us for a day at the Royal Canberra Show. Tickets and more information will be distributed to the event. Carers are to arrange their own transport to and from the show.

DATE: Friday 22 February 2013

TIME: 10:00 – 3:00pm

LOCATION: Royal Canberra Show, EPIC, Flemington Road, Mitchell.

Education Session on Dementia and Alzheimer's

This session will be presented by Karen from Alzheimer's Australia. Topics will include: definitions; types and symptoms of dementia; effective communication; changed behaviour and strategies.

DATE: Tuesday 26 February 2013

TIME: 9:30am – 1:30pm

LOCATION: The Carers Hub, Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt.

Private Viewing at the National Gallery of Australia

Stars in the River – The Prints of Jessie Traill

This exhibition celebrates the artistic career of one of Australia's most important printmakers of the twentieth century, Jessie Traill.

DATE: Thursday 28 February 2013

TIME: 10:30am (Meet at the Main Entrance at 10:15am)

LOCATION: The National Gallery of Australia, Parkes.

The above five events are free for current carers who reside in the ACT. To RSVP call Eleanor on 6296 9908 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au.

An Opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Carers

Are you a carer of a loved one with mental health and perhaps drug and alcohol problems? A two day group session around caring for someone with some of these issues is being offered. This is a tremendous opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers to learn and share.

DATES: Wednesday 21 March and Thursday 22 March 2013

TIME: 10:00 – 4:00pm

LOCATION: Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt

COST: Free.

Please register your interest by phoning Donna (Carers ACT) on 6296 9900.

Self esteem and assertiveness for women who are caring for someone with a disability

This course is for women who are caring for someone with a disability, who would like to increase their self esteem and express themselves with confidence. The course is delivered in partnership between Disability ACT, Women's Information & Referral Centre, and Carers ACT.

DATES: Mondays 11, 18 and 25 February and 4, 18, and 25 March 2013

TIME: 9:30am – 12:00pm

LOCATION: Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt

COST: Free.

Bookings are essential. For more information or to register your interest, please contact Disability Information Service on 6207 1086, or email disabilityact@act.gov.au. Click [here to download the flyer and registration form](#).

Better Start for Children with Disability expansion

From 1 January 2013, children who are aged under 6 years and have been diagnosed with Prader Willi, Williams, Angelman, Kabuki Make Up, Smith-Magenis, CHARGE, Cornelia de Lange or Cri du Chat syndromes or microcephaly will be able to register to access early intervention funding of up to \$12,000 (up to a maximum of \$6,000 per financial year) under the Better Start for Children with Disability (Better Start) initiative.

Since 1 July 2011, children who are aged under 6 years and have been diagnosed with cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, Fragile X syndrome and moderate or greater hearing or vision impairments, including deafblindness, have been able to register for access to the early intervention funding under Better Start.

The funding can be used to pay for services such as speech pathology, audiology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, optometry, psychology, orthoptics and services of teachers of the deaf. Families have until their child turns seven to use the early intervention funding.

This targeted early intervention during the pre-school years aims to complement existing Commonwealth and State and Territory services and to assist these children to have the best possible preparation for the transition to school.

For more information, call the Carer Advisory Service line on 1800 242 636. The Better Start initiative is funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs. For more information about supports available under this initiative visit the Carers ACT [website](#).

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 supports available under this Program visit the Carers ACT [website](#).

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

Did you know that Carers ACT can provide short-term counseling for family carers? Our counseling 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 1800 242 636.

ACT News

Emergency Guide and Grab and Go Kit

The Emergency Guide and Grab and Go Kit has been developed to provide you with guidance on how to prepare and act during a range of emergencies. The information in this Kit will assist you in developing an emergency plan for your home and have all your key information in one place in case you are

required to evacuate.

Being prepared can help you to remain independent and well-equipped to face an emergency. If you would like a copy of the Emergency Guide and Grab and Go Booklet, you can find them at the following ACT Government agencies listed below:

- Gungahlin Child and Family Centre: Phone: 6207 0120
- Tuggeranong Child and Family Centre: Phone: 6207 8228
- West Belconnen Child and Family Centre: Phone: 6205 2904
- Belconnen Shopfront: Phone 13 22 81
- Dickson Shopfront: Phone 13 22 81
- Tuggeranong Shopfront: Phone 13 22 81
- Woden Shopfront: Phone 13 22 81.

You can also download the guides by clicking these links: [Your Guide to Preparing for an Emergency](#) and [Your Emergency Grab and Go Booklet](#).

Community Consultation Forum to Inform Mental Health Community Coalition (MHCC) ACT Budget Submission

The Mental Health Community Coalition ACT is holding a forum which will provide an opportunity for community members to input to the MHCC ACT 2013-14 Budget Submission. [Click here for more information](#).

DATE: 7 February 2013

TIME: 5:30pm – 7:00pm

LOCATION: Room 6, Level 2 Griffin Centre, 20 Genge Street, Civic

RSVP: Contact MHCC ACT by phone 6249 7756 or email mhccact@mhccact.org.au.

Mental Health Justice Health, Alcohol & Drug Service – Smoke-Free Newsletter

The Division's first 2013 Newsletter on the Smoke-Free Environment may be accessed [here](#).

Headspace ACT – Upcoming Programs

Headspace ACT has some great upcoming programs about to start:

- Chilled Anxiety group for young people aged 13-15 experiencing mild anxiety – commencing Wednesday 13 February. Click [here](#) for more information
- Art therapy program for people aged 15-18 year old experiencing anxiety, to increase skills in resilience – commencing Thursday 21 February. Click [here](#) for more information
- Ed-space. A new initiative. This is a monthly education/information session for family members, friends, carers, and young people, on various topics of interest. The first topic is 'mental health and wellbeing – what is normal?' This program will be held the fourth Tuesday evening of the month – commencing Tuesday 25 February. Click [here](#) for more information.

Discoveries Therapy group for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC) invites women survivors of child sexual abuse to attend a confidential and friendly group. Topics for this eight week program include:

- Resisting self blame
- Breaking secrecy and silence

- Tricks, lies and other perpetrator tactics
- Working with anger
- Rewriting relationships
- Sex and intimacy.

DATE: Weekly from 13 February – 3 April 2013

TIME: 4:00pm – 6:30pm

LOCATION: Canberra Rape Crisis Centre group room, Weston

COST: Free

Discoveries is open to all, you do not need to be seeing, or have seen a CRCC counsellor to be able to join our group. Contact Jen or Penny for more information on 6247 2525.

SMART Recovery at Directions

SMART Recovery is a self-help group for people facing addiction focusing on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy. The four main principles of SMART Recovery are:

- Motivation to abstain
- Coping with urges
- Lifestyle balance
- Problem solving.

Attendees are encouraged to share strategies and tools used around managing their addictive behaviours. All are welcome, whether in active addiction or recovery.

DATES & TIMES: Sessions are held on each Tuesday 10:30am – 12:00noon and Wednesday 5:30 – 7:00pm

LOCATION: 1 Bradley Street, Woden

No bookings required. For further information contact Directions on 6122 8000.

COMPASS Family Support at Directions

COMPASS is a support group for family members and friends of those where alcohol, tobacco and/or other drugs have impacted on their life. Families, friends and support people are encouraged to share their stories and support one another. The group focuses on self care, setting boundaries, understanding addiction, communication strategies, and how to access support when dealing with the chaos of someone else's addiction.

Compass is facilitated by a Directions counsellor and a trained Alcohol & Other Drug worker. The support group runs every second Wednesday.

DATE: Next session will be held on Wednesday 23 February

TIME: 5:30 – 7:30pm

LOCATION: 1 Bradley Street, Woden

No bookings are required, a light dinner is provided. For further information contact Directions on 6122 8000.

Stepping Out Workshop — Free workshop for same sex attracted women

Stepping Out is a series of exercises where we explore issues like: feelings of attraction towards other women; coming out; relationships; safer sex; STIs; and the gay/lesbian/bi/queer community. We provide

a safe and friendly environment where these issues can be explored. Stepping Out is peer run and facilitated by other women who have completed the Stepping Out course.

DATES: 12, 19, 26 February, 5 and 12 March 2013

TIME: 6:00 – 8:30/9:00pm

LOCATION: Westlund House, 16 Gordon Street, Acton, opposite the Film and Sound Archive and the Academy of Science (Shine Dome)

COST: Free

A light dinner and refreshments are provided. Places are strictly limited and bookings are essential. If you are interested in doing this course you need to register, or you have any further questions you can do so, by emailing workshops@aimsaction.org.au.

National & International News and Research

Recall of some batches of Ventolin and Asmol Inhalers

The Acting Chief Health Officer of NSW, Dr Tony Penna, advised on 24 December 2012 that GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) had initiated a retail level recall of 10 batches of Ventolin and Asmol Inhalers due to a fault in the delivery mechanism leading to an inconsistent dose. In devices that are affected, the dose of the active medication – salbutamol – may not be delivered in full. In some cases, approximately one third of the normal dose may be delivered per puff of the inhaler. Read the [full media release here](#) and [more information here](#).

Keeping your cool for carers

Hot weather can cause serious health problems, and some people in our community are at greater risk of serious health effects than others. Anyone who cares for, supports or assists people at risk of serious health effects from hot weather can play a key role in keeping them healthy during a heat wave. It is important that people at risk are encouraged to manage their health appropriately in hot weather and visit their GP if necessary.

For information about what you can do to keep someone healthy during a heat wave, please see [‘your health in hot weather’](#). You can access the more information on the [NSW Health website here](#) and a booklet on information on [‘how to keep someone healthy during hot weather’ here](#); this booklet is available in a variety of languages.

Carers NSW Biennial Conference 2013

The Carers NSW Biennial Conference 2013 is entitled Caring, Working, Living to be held at the Novotel, Sydney Brighton Beach on Thursday 14 and Friday 15 March. The focus of the conference for 2013 will be around the themes of:

- Caring: increasing opportunities for carers to exercise informed choices and to negotiate the shifting policy landscape
- Working: achieving workplace arrangements that work for working carers
- Living: sustaining carers' own health and wellbeing in a caring context.

For further information and registration visit www.carersnsw.org.au/conf2013.

23rd Annual TheMHS Conference – Call for papers now open

This year's TheMHS Conference will be held in Melbourne, 20-23 August 2013. The theme of the conference is: *FORGING the FUTURE. Challenging Attitudes! Creating Connections! Transforming Lives!* For more information about this important conference, visit TheMHS Conference [website](#).

National Contributing Life Project

The commencement of the National Contributing Life Project is underway. The project is being conducted for Australia's National Health Commission. It aims to develop a method by which Australians can talk to the Commission on a regular basis about what their lives are like – their mental health and wellbeing, the mental health and wellbeing of a family member or friend. Click [here to read more about the project and how you can contribute](#). Click [here to read a questions and answers sheet](#) about the project.

Breaking the Cycle of Depression and Anxiety

A new DVD for parents with mental illness, launched on 15 January, will help them to be open and talk about their mental health issues with their children. Funded by the Australian Government, the DVD, called Family Focus, is based on an approach developed by US-based Dr William Beardslee, an internationally acclaimed specialist in mental illness prevention. It was developed in collaboration with Australian psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health nurses, occupational therapists, social workers, researchers and Australian parents and children with lived experience of parental depression/anxiety. Click [here](#) to read the full media release.

FaHCSIA Family Mental Health Support Services

Family Mental Health Support Service activities target prevention and early intervention, with a particular focus on Indigenous families and those from a culturally and linguistically diverse background. All services funded under Family Mental Health Support Services are aimed at:

- developing a sound evidence base and practical framework for early and preventative mental health intervention in a community context
- empowering and strengthening families through information, education and skills development;
- developing more effective parenting, relationships and communication strategies within families affected by mental illness
- improving the emotional health and wellbeing of family members and carers
- increasing community awareness and understanding of mental health issues and the impact of mental illness on families
- improving family functioning and social support for families, carers, children and young people affected by mental illness.

[Click here to locate your area's Family Mental Health Support Services](#) contact details.

Comparative study of self-directed support

Therese Williams, a Winston Churchill Fellow, has written a report, *To investigate the policy and practice of self directed support for people with a mental illness – UK, Ireland, Belgium, Netherlands*. [You can access the full report here](#).

Preschool kids' wellbeing project evaluation

A pioneering national project that builds the resilience of young children in preschools and long day care and reduces their risk of experiencing mental health problems has delivered significant results.

KidsMatter Early Childhood has improved the mental health and wellbeing of children, helped staff care better for children and improved links with mental health professionals according to a two year Flinders University evaluation funded by beyondblue. [Read the full media release here.](#)

Brain imaging identifies Bipolar Disorder risk in adolescents

Researchers from the Black Dog Institute and University of NSW have used brain imaging technology to show that young people with a known genetic risk of bipolar disorder but no clinical signs of the condition have clear and quantifiable differences in brain activity when compared to controls. “We found that the young people who had a parent or sibling with bipolar disorder had reduced brain responses to emotive faces, particularly a fearful face. This is an extremely promising breakthrough”, study leader Professor Philip Mitchell said. [Read the full media release here.](#)

Mental Health Professional Online Development (MHPOD)

MHPOD is a new, evidence-based online learning resource for people working in mental health. There are about seventy four hours of material on 48 topics, written and produced in Australia. The topics range from recovery to legislation and dual disability. MHPOD is primarily designed for nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, psychiatrists and psychologists working in mental health in Australia. It is expected that other people, including consumer advocates, carer advocates, Aboriginal health workers, and other allied health workers will also find it useful. You can [access the website here.](#)

Psychobabble the Little Red Book of Psychiatric Jargon

Psychobabble has been put together by [Our Consumer Place](#), a resource centre for mental health consumers based in Victoria, in response to a demand from people diagnosed with ‘mental illness’ for a collection of psychiatric jargon and acronyms. You can [download Psychobabble](#) and other resources from Our Consumer Place here.

A Bit Mental

Jimmy Hunt was looking for a solution to his 2 ½ years of debilitating depression. After some research he decided that he needed to have a goal and get fit. His answer was to Lilo the entire Waikato River in New Zealand! [Click here to watch his inspiring and fun documentary](#) about taking risks and getting out of your comfort zone.

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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