



MENTAL HEALTH  
**carers  
voice**

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

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E-Bulletin

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## **Mental Health Carers Voice**

### ***How will mental health developments affect you and your family?***

#### **A Networking & Consulting Forum — Tuesday 19 November**

Find out the latest mental health news and their impacts on you and your family by joining in a conversation with:

- Ms Katrina Bracher, Executive Director, Mental Health, Justice Health, Alcohol & Drugs Service Division
- Mr Richard Bromhead, Manager, Mental Health Policy Unit, ACT Health
- Ms Wendy Kipling, ACT NDIS Taskforce.

This forum will provide you with an opportunity to ask our line-up of experts your questions about current and future health infrastructure developments, mental health reforms, and the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

We are delighted that local band *The Rainbow Musos*, who gave a rousing, *ad hoc* medley of

'oldie but goldie' songs to participants at the launch of Mental Health Week, will open the forum.

**Date:** Tuesday 19 November  
**Time:** 5.00pm – 8.00pm  
**Location:** The Hall, University House, Australian National University, Acton  
**Cost:** Free. Refreshments will be provided  
**RSVP:** **5.00pm, Friday 15 November.** Phone Emma on 6296 9952 or email [mhcarers@carersact.org.au](mailto:mhcarers@carersact.org.au). Please let Emma know of any dietary requirements.

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### **Understanding Carers Rights Report**

As part of Mental Health Week, Carers ACT hosted the Understanding Carers Rights forum on 9 October. This event attracted 66 participants who engaged in a lively discussion with a diverse group of panellists comprising:

- Janet Milford, ACT carer representative, National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum
- Ron Cahill, Former Chief Magistrate and Coroner for the ACT
- Anita Phillips, ACT Public Advocate
- Carolyn Sakkala, Mental Health, Justice Health, Alcohol and Drug Service
- Dannielle Nagle, Mental Health, Justice Health, Alcohol and Drug Service
- Ben Ilsley, Policy Advisor, Carers Victoria
- Sue Telford, carer representative

A report of this forum has been prepared, and may be accessed [here](#).

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### **\*\* Exciting new Mental Health Project: Carers invited to participate in focus group \*\***

Many mental health carers are not aware of how or when they are able to be involved in the care and treatment of their family member or friend when in the public/acute service system setting. Yet policy and research evidence suggests that carer involvement has beneficial outcomes for the treatment and recovery of the person with mental illness. Carers ACT is aware that a lack of knowledge combined with a sense of helplessness and fear may contribute to carers' experiences of vicarious trauma and burnout. Carers ACT has therefore committed to the development of a resource for carers which assists them in negotiating mental health services. Dee McGrath, Chief Executive Officer of Carers ACT, announced at the *Understanding Carers Rights* forum that a resource for mental health carers will be developed and launched in the first half of 2014. This resource will provide carers with:

- clear guidance on when and how they can be involved in the care and treatment of their family member or friend

- confidence and clarity around their rights in negotiating ACT Health mental health services.

The project will involve consultation with mental health carers, commencing with a focus group scheduled for:

**Wednesday 11 December, 11.00–12.30pm**  
**The Hub, Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Crescent Holt**

Carers who are interested in participating in this focus group are invited to contact Doris Kordes, Mental Health Carers Voice Policy Officer, on (02) 6296 9936 or email [Doris.Kordes@carersact.org.au](mailto:Doris.Kordes@carersact.org.au).

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## ***Latest news from Janet Milford, ACT representative, National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum***

### **National Disability Insurance Scheme News**

[Click here](#) for the latest National Disability Insurance Scheme News E-Bulletin.

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### **International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD)**

*“Break barriers, open doors: for an inclusive society for all”*

It is important that people with disability participate in all areas of life including work, education and in the community.

Through promoting understanding of the barriers experienced by people with disability and encouraging everyone to support equal rights to dignity and wellbeing, IDPwD is an opportunity to celebrate this importance.

Celebrated on 3 December each year, 2013 marks a significant milestone — the 21st anniversary of IDPwD. The theme for 2013 is 'Let's break barriers and open doors!', represented by an orange and turquoise 'twibbon'.

For more information or to register an event visit [www.idpwd.com.au](http://www.idpwd.com.au) or call 1800 440 385 (TTY users please phone 1800 555 677 and ask for 1800 440 385).

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### **Service User in Academia Symposium**

Do you have an interest in consumer research or education?

Don't miss this fantastic opportunity to meet like-minded peers from New Zealand and Australia in Melbourne this November. The conference showcases much of the latest consumer-led

research and education innovations and will provide invaluable networking opportunities. This is a very reasonably priced conference, designed to be affordable and accessible.

**Date:** Monday 25 – Tuesday 26 November

**Location:** CQ University's Melbourne Campus, 108 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne

[Click here](#) for registration details, location map and other details.

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## Carers ACT

### Anglicare report confirms that disability support programs must take into account the needs of carers and families

Carers Australia welcomes the report released by Anglicare yesterday on *Caring for a Child with an Intellectual Disability and Challenging Behaviours*. The report dramatically highlights the strain on families caring for such children. Access to suitable, affordable respite care to allow families to take a break from focusing on the care and management of the child and to spend some time focussing on themselves and each other is paramount among these needs.

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

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### Self Esteem & Assertiveness for Women Carers — 6 week course

This course is for women who are caring for someone with a disability or mental health issue, who would like to increase their self esteem and express themselves with confidence. The course will cover:

- The difference between self-perception, self-awareness and self-esteem
- Past and present factors that influence self-esteem and self-acceptance
- Making your inner critic work for you rather than against you
- Overcoming negative self-talk and increasing self-value
- Strategies to discover and enhance your positive feelings and wellbeing
- Accepting and befriending your emotions
- What assertiveness means, and
- Communicating with clarity and respect for self and others.

**Date:** 11, 18 and 25 November and 2, 9, and 16 December

**Time:** Mondays 9.30am – 12.00pm

**Venue:** Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt

**RSVP:** Bookings are essential. For more information or to register your interest, contact

Helen Malcomess at Carers ACT on 6296 9900.

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### **On Course for Carers — Herbal & Prescription Medication, Dru Yoga for health & wellbeing**

Naturopath Cathy will explain possible interference with medication absorption when herbs, supplements and medications are taken together. Shirley will lead carers in a refreshing yoga session.

**Date:** Thursday 21 November

**Time:** 10.00am – 12.00pm

**Venue:** The Carers Hub, Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt

This event is free for family carers residing in the ACT. To register please call 6296 9908 or email [rsvp@carersact.org.au](mailto: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 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](mailto: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:** Tuesday 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](mailto: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](mailto: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**

### **Morning Tea for PND**

PANDSI is holding a Morning Tea for PND to raise awareness of Postnatal Depression during PND Awareness Week (gold coin donation). Children welcome.

Your assistance will help increase awareness, reduce stigma, support families on the pathway to wellness and raise the much needed funding to help continue the fight against the debilitating effects of Perinatal Depression.

**Date:** Wednesday 20 November  
**Time:** 10.00am – 12.00pm  
**Venue:** 25 Stapylton Street, Holder  
**RSVP:** Monday 18 November by calling 6287 3961

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### **ACT Mental Health Consumer Network — 2013 Annual General Meeting**

This year's guest speaker is Dr Michelle Banfield: Research Fellow at ACACIA (ACT Consumer and Carer Mental Health Research Unit) and Member of the Consumer Advisory Group overseeing the National Consumer Organisation.

Nominations for the Network's Board are welcomed from both Primary and Associate members.

Primary membership is free and automatically granted to all people with lived experience of mental illness, past or present, upon receipt of a completed membership form which can be found at <http://www.actmhcn.org.au/join-us.html>. Associate membership is also available at the same page however as Associate memberships require Board endorsement, it will not be possible for newly applying Associates to join the Board until after the December 2013 Board meeting.

**Date:** Tuesday 19 November

**Time:** 12.30 – 3.00pm

**Venue:** Meeting Room 6, Level 1, Griffin Centre, 20 Genge Street, Canberra City

**RSVP:** Please RSVP for catering purposes by Friday 15 November. Advise us of any dietary requirements you may have.

The 2013 Annual General Meeting information package is now available on the Network's website at <http://www.actmhcn.org.au/>

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### ACT Consumer Carer Caucus

**Date:** Friday 22 November

**Time:** 12.00 – 2.00pm

**Venue:** Griffin Centre, Canberra City, MHCC meeting room, Level 1

**RSVP:** Lunch will be served as usual so RSVPs are appreciated.

[Click here](#) for the Caucus agenda.

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### Mental health consumer and carer research forum — Wednesday 27 November

The new ACT Mental Health Consumer and Carer Research Unit (ACACIA) located at the Centre for Mental Health, ANU is inviting consumers and carers of people with a mental illness to this one day forum. This is the first event for ACACIA and it has two purposes:

1. A chance for ACACIA to tell you about the project and their hopes for what it can achieve
2. A chance for consumers and carers to tell ACACIA about your hopes for the project and how you would like to be involved

The venue is still to be confirmed, but if you are interested in attending please contact Emma Judges on 6296 9900 or [emma.judges@carersact.org.au](mailto:emma.judges@carersact.org.au). The forum is free, and Carers ACT can assist you with respite.

Two carer representatives and Carers ACT are on ACACIA's Advisory Group.

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### Advocacy and Representation Training — Term 3 registration now available

Registration for the Advocacy and Representation Training Term 3, 2013 are now open!

The ART program is delivered over a few terms throughout the year. ART is free to attend, and all participants graduate with a certificate of participation.

Each term consists of ten sessions, which includes the Self-Advocacy course (five sessions) and the Consumer Representation course (five sessions).

All are welcome to enrol in the Self-Advocacy course, however only those who have completed Self-Advocacy are eligible to enrol in Consumer Representation. Graduates of the course who have a lived experience of mental illness are eligible to apply for a volunteer role as a Consumer Representative on a committee and/or to co-facilitate components of the ART course itself.

Please note that in this term only the Self Advocacy course is being offered. This term will be offered in two day intensive delivery mode. The Five sessions of the Self Advocacy Course are:

1. Introduction
2. The Practice of Self Esteem and Self Confidence
3. The Practice of Self Expression
4. The Practice of Self Reliance and Self Determination
5. Self Development

**Date:** Thursday 28 November and Thursday 5 December

**Time:** 10.00am – 4.00pm

**Venue:** ACT Mental Health Consumer Network, Level 2 Room 11, Griffin Centre, Canberra City

To register for Term 3, 2013 of the Network's Advocacy and Representation Training, please complete the attached registration form and return it by hand to Level 2, Room 11 Griffin Centre, by post to ACTMHCN, Reply Paid 469, Civic Square ACT 2608, by fax to 6230 5790 or by scanning and emailing to [representation@actmhc.org.au](mailto:representation@actmhc.org.au)

For further information please phone the Consumer Representative Program Coordinator, Purity Goj, on 6230 5796, or alternatively email her at [representation@actmhc.org.au](mailto:representation@actmhc.org.au)

[Click here](#) for the registration form.

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### Human Services in the Spotlight

Canberrans are encouraged to share their views on the development of a "Human Services Blueprint", a three-year plan to make the ACT's human services system more accessible and responsive.

To learn more about human services and to participate in this conversation please visit the ACT

Government's Time to Talk website [www.timetotalk.act.gov.au](http://www.timetotalk.act.gov.au), which includes the *Towards One Human Services System* discussion paper along with survey questions. Submissions on the discussion paper and the Time to talk forum will close on 29 November.

[Click here](#) for more information.

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### Invitation to consultation on the Improving the Management of Cognitive Impairment using the NSQHS Standards Project

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) is currently undertaking a project to improve the management of cognitive impairment using the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards. During the first phase of this project, the Commission will produce a draft resource, which aims to guide services in improving the care of people with cognitive impairment.

The Commission will soon begin consultation, focusing on how well the draft resource

- Raises awareness of cognitive impairment as a safety and quality issue;
- Provides a useful guide to actions, strategies and resources to improve safety and quality; and
- Demonstrates how actions can be mapped to the current NSQHS Standards.

Feedback will be sought through a national round of consultation forums and an online consultation survey. Consultation forums will be held for both consumers and health care providers in all States and Territories between **Tuesday 29 October** and **Wednesday 4 December**.

The online consultation survey will be available for completion up to **Friday 6 December**.

To express your interest in attending a consultation forum, please complete the online expression of interest form: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ciconsultationregistration>

For further information about the project and consultation, please visit:

<http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/cognitive-impairment/consultation/>

Please do not hesitate to contact the project team by emailing [cognitive.impairment@safetyandquality.gov.au](mailto:cognitive.impairment@safetyandquality.gov.au) or phoning 9126 3648 if you have any questions or require further information.

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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:** 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:CarerSkills@cit.edu.au)

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### ImagineMore conference

This conference is for individuals and families who are experiencing disability and mental illness, friends and service providers.

Keynote speakers:

- Bob Rhodes (UK) providing a workshop about 'What really matters' and reflections from the UK direct payments and personal budgets scheme.
- Michael Kendrick (Canada/USA) discussing how to connect with communities, our values and personal fulfilment.

**Date:** Wednesday 27 – Thursday 28 November

**Venue:** Australian Catholic University

Follow this link to register <http://imaginemore.org.au/november-conference/>

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### 9<sup>th</sup> National Seclusion and Restraint Forum

One of the core functions of the Safety and Quality Partnership Standing Committee (SQPSC) is the allocation of and support to jurisdictions to hold an annual national seclusion and restraint reduction forum. National seclusion and restraint reduction forums provide a networking opportunity for mental health staff with an interest in reducing seclusion and restraint across Australia and maintain momentum in the changing of culture and practice. National seclusion and restraint reduction forums additionally identify ongoing areas of continuous improvement and innovation in this arena.

The ACT was asked in November 2012 by the Safety and Quality Partnership Standing Committee to host the 2013 Forum. The theme of this year's Forum is ***'Reducing the trauma with least restrictive practice: Why it matters to walk the talk'***.

The desired outcomes of the Forum are:

- A continued reduction in the number of seclusion episodes
- The reduction of aggressive behaviour by any person in mental health settings and minimisation of the use of seclusion and restraint
- Best practices for the reduction and where possible the elimination of seclusion and restraint, and
- An increased focus on understanding and reducing areas of restraint in Health Services

beyond mental health.

**Date:** Thursday 28 – Friday 29 November

**Venue:** Shine Dome, Australian Academy of Science, Acton

[Click here](#) to view the flyer. [Click here](#) to access the registration form. [Click here](#) for a list of nearby accommodation.

If you have any further queries email [Elizabeth.medley@act.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.medley@act.gov.au) or phone 6205 2154.

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### **Free Training Course: Engaging People to Talk About Problem Gambling Issues**

Many people with gambling problems seek help for other problems such as financial difficulties, relationship, housing, mental health or drug and alcohol problems before seeking help for their gambling problems. It is likely that community sector workers in these non gambling specific areas will encounter people with gambling problems. This training will increase awareness and skills for these workers equipping them to help their clients begin the process of change.

The workshop will cover the following topics:

- Recognising problem gambling
- Raising the issue of gambling
- Assessment of gambling and related concerns
- Measuring readiness for change in relation to gambling
- Working with reluctance and resistance to changing gambling
- Overview of best practice in the gambling context
- Gambling specific referral options.

**Date:** Thursday 28 November

**Time:** 9.00am – 4.30pm

**Venue:** CIT, Ainsworth Street, Phillip

Tea/Coffee, morning tea and lunch are provided.

For more information or to book a place at the course for please contact Alex Ingham at the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission on 6207 0305 or email [alexander.ingham@act.gov.au](mailto:alexander.ingham@act.gov.au)

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## ***National & International News and Research***

**Does your carer take sugar — Carers and human rights: the parallel struggles of disabled people and carers for equal treatment**

This paper considers the struggle being waged by unpaid carers (sometimes referred to as 'carergivers') for recognition as 'rights holders'. It locates the origins and describes the growth of the 'carers movement' and argues that it has many similarities with the Disabled People's movement that came to prominence in the 1970's. The paper: (1) identifies the distinct legal status that carers have in the majority of states in the world; (2) describes carers' shared history of adverse treatment within most states; and (3) argues that carers' social exclusion arises from a widespread hostility to 'dependency' – a hostility that is gendered and particularly evident in neoliberal political discourse.

[Click here](#) for the full report published by Carers NSW.

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### **Carers in Higher Education**

The Disabilities & Carers Collective from the Student's Representative Council of the University of Sydney has produced a booklet to highlight the issues affecting student carers.

This valuable resource outlines what it is to be a student who has a caring role, how there is a need for greater recognition and awareness of student carers, and how universities can better support them, thereby encouraging greater participation in tertiary education.

Carers Australia CEO, Ara Cresswell, wrote the introduction for this great resource, which can be downloaded [here](#).

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### **Growing older, staying well — A SANE Report**

An increase in people ageing with mental illness will create challenges for housing, community support programs, and public mental health services.

People living with mental illness are at an increased risk of developing physical health problems, being isolated, having few supports, and living in unstable housing. These challenges will only be compounded with age.

This report examines the lived experience of older adults with mental illness, their carers, family and friends. It describes some of the major concerns faced by this group and outlines the key areas in need of attention and change.

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

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### **Churchill Fellowship**

A Churchill Fellowship aims to provide an opportunity for Australians to travel overseas to conduct research in their chosen field that is not readily available in Australia.

A Churchill Fellowship is a remarkable opportunity to travel overseas for a minimum of four and a maximum of about eight weeks to conduct research into a topic that you are passionate about. It is for anyone who feels that they have exhausted all research opportunities within Australia and would like to see what overseas currently has to offer. Every application is assessed based on merit, a demonstrated need for the proposed research, the perceived benefit to Australia and a willingness to share the overseas findings and knowledge with the Australian community.

To be eligible to apply for a Churchill Fellowship you must:

- be an Australian Citizen over the age of 18
- not be completing tertiary studies directly related to the topic of your proposed project
- have experience in and commitment to the field of your project
- have a worthy project that requires overseas investigation
- be willing to disseminate the results of your research to the broader Australian community, and
- not have been awarded a Churchill Fellowship in the past.

Applications close Monday 28 February. Please visit <http://www.churchilltrust.com.au/>, email [churchilltrust@bigpond.com](mailto:churchilltrust@bigpond.com), or telephone 1800 777 231 (freecall) or 6247 8333 for further information.

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### **Our Consumer Place**

A fantastic range of new resources have been produced by the team at Our Consumer Place, in partnership with Our Community.

The website is a resource centre run entirely by consumers and provides information, training, support and advice to consumer-developed groups and projects. Currently available for download is 'The Consumer Movement in Australia: A memoir by Merinda Epstein'. Merinda has been working as an advocate and activist in mental health for 27 years and her memoir covers her personal experiences of being bullied and some of the big questions that still plague both mental health and the consumer movement.

[Click here](#) to access 'The Consumer Movement in Australia: A memoir by Merinda Epstein'.

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### **National Mental Health Core Capabilities**

If you are a consumer or carer or work with a community, private or public mental health service and are interested in mental health workforce capabilities, Health Workforce Australia is seeking your feedback on their draft version of the National Mental Health Core Capabilities document. The document aims to articulate the common behaviours needed across the mental

health workforce for the delivery of high quality care that supports the needs and expectations of people using services, their families and carers. Comment will be sought through focus group workshops during November. Places will be limited so people are encouraged to register early.

[Click here](#) for a fact sheet on the Mental Health Workforce Reform Program. [Click here](#) for further information or to register.

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## *In the media*

### **Reaching Indigenous youth about mental health**

A group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youths have come together to develop a new campaign to improve mental-health awareness among Indigenous youth.

They are working with the national youth mental-health foundation Headspace in attempt to spread community information.

Several of the participants explained to SBS what they hope the campaign can achieve.

[Click here](#) for the full story.

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### **SANE media release — Depression in Australian workplaces more ‘hidden’ than in Europe: new research**

Almost 50% of Australian workers who had taken time off work because of depression kept the reason hidden from their employer according to a large scale national study released today by SANE Australia involving more than 1000 workers.

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

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### **Links to current media that may be of interest to carers**

- [When is it ok to joke about mental illness?](#)
- [Halving Rates of Mental Illness](#)
- [Disability App ‘Out & About’](#)
- [Qbn carer a super mum](#)
- [Comment: Flexible working is great but carers should have rights too](#)
- [New secure mental health unit Ashton House opens in Adelaide](#)
- [Experts call for more investment in infant mental health](#)
- [Talk about it, mate: fighting suicide and depression in Australian men](#)
- [Experts say Canberra youth health units a must](#)

- [Counting the cost of caring too much](#)
- [Older Aussies with Mental Illness Experience Lack of Care – Study](#)
- [Mental health and elite sport: Combating stigma of mental illness](#)
- [Mental health blind spot in ACAT](#)
- [Charity calls for NDIS to take better care of carers](#)
- [SA mental health workers to get LGBTI training](#)
- [Black Dog Cycle Across Australia: pedalling for mental health](#)
- [U2's Adam Clayton spreads mental health understanding with "Walk in My Shoes"](#)
- [Breaking the silence over suicide](#)

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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](http://www.carersvoice.com.au)