

E Bulletin – 15 November 2012

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Mental Health Carers Voice

Mental Health Carers Networking and Consulting Forum 20 November - Ending Homelessness based on the Common Ground Model

Liz Dawson, Project Coordinator of Common Ground Canberra and Simon Rosenberg, Chief Executive of Northside Community Service will present on *Ending Homelessness* based on the Common Ground Model, which was showcased at the Carers ACT summit: Supported Living Options in March 2012. The Common Ground Model is a partnership between community groups, the private sector and the government, to offer a supported and inclusive community for homeless individuals and families, as well as low income earners. It will also include support services on site for people who have need for these services. The recently-concluded Labor-Greens Agreement means that the new ACT

Government has a high profile commitment to Common Ground.

Carer representatives, who have an interest in supported accommodation, will also be presenting at this forum. This Forum gives you the opportunity to have discussions about supported housing needs and homelessness in Canberra. The Forum also provides carers with an opportunity to connect with MH Carer Representatives, find out information about current policy developments and to raise issues of concern with representatives.

Date: Tuesday 20 November 2012

Time: 12.00pm – 2.00pm

Location: Riley Hall, Pilgrim House, 69 Northbourne Avenue (on the corner of Rudd Street), Canberra

RSVP: Friday 16 November 2012 by email mhcarers@carersact.org.au or phone Rosie Fisk on 9296 9900.

Light canapés will be provided.

Mental Health, Justice Health, Alcohol & Drug Services Division - Forum with Professor Sharon Lawn

The Division has invited Professor Sharon Lawn to Canberra on 27-29 November to hold a series of staff and stakeholder forums. Professor Lawn

is from Flinders University and has experience in implementing smoke-free environments in mental health inpatient units. On 1 January 2013, all mental health, justice health, alcohol and drug service facilities will become smoke-free environments.

A presentation for mental health carers will be provided by Professor Lawn followed by question and discussion time. This Forum will provide carers with an opportunity to find out more about the prevalence and disease burden of tobacco addiction on people living with mental health issues and research findings on implementing smoke-free policies in mental health services.

Date: Tuesday 27 November 2012

Time: 11.00am – 1.00pm

Location: The Hub, Carers ACT, 80 Beaufort Crescent, Holt

RSVP: By Monday 26 November to mhcarers@carersact.org.au

For more information about this event, please contact Rosie Fisk on 6296 9900 or email rosie.fisk@carersact.org.au

Vacancy for National Mental Health Carer Representative – Advance notice

Carers ACT will shortly be advertising for nominations for two carers to become members of the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF). One carer will act as a carer representative, and one carer will act as a proxy as required when the representative is not available to attend meetings.

The roles and responsibilities of the NMHCCF are to be a key national, independent, mental health consumer and carer voice. Carer representation at a national level requires specific skills beyond an individual's own personal experiences. As system advocates, representatives must:

1. be capable of reflecting the viewpoints and concerns of carers
2. be persons in whom carers and Carers ACT have confidence
3. have strong communication links with their constituents so that they are able to provide the sort of representation that a diverse carer community requires.

NMHCCF members are expected to participate by:

- attending meetings, two 2-day face to face meetings (usually March and September) in the Eastern States and two teleconferences per year
- actively participating in discussions
- contributing ideas and expertise to the development of NMHCCF activities, policy and planning
- following up identified actions.

Carer representatives are remunerated by the NMHCCF for their participation, and Carers ACT provides support to the ACT carer representatives.

More information will be available on the Carers Voice website soon, and via the E-Bulletin. Email mhcarers@carersact.org.au if you are interested in these opportunities. For more information about the NMHCCF, click [here](#).

Advocacy for Mental Health Carers

Following on from the Advocacy Lunch during Mental Health Week, the Carers ACT Advocate has provided Carers Voice with some notes about accessing the Advocacy Program, and also some advocacy tips for carers. These notes are available [here](#).

CARERS ACT

NEW Northside Mental Health Carers Support Group

Date: Tuesday 11 December 2012

Time: 5.00pm – 7.00pm

Location: Carers ACT, 80 Beaufort Crescent, Holt

Further information: rsvp@carersact.org.au or call Eleanor on 6296 9908.

Who Cares – Carers' Walking Group

This weekly walking group is being organised by a group of Carers. The group heads off around 10.15am for a 30-45 minute walk then has coffee and a chat afterwards.

Dates: Friday mornings

Time: Meet at 10.00am for a 10.15am start

Location: Carers ACT, 80 Beaufort Crescent, Holt

Further information: rsvp@carersact.org.au or call Eleanor on 6296 9908.

New staff member for the Policy and Communications Team

Carers ACT is happy to welcome Bill Kerley to its policy team. Bill has joined us in a contract position until July 2013. Many mental health carers will know Bill through his representation work, particularly on the Review Advisory Committee that is reviewing and updating the

ACT's Mental Health Treatment Act. Bill's broad experience with government and other organisations will contribute to his Carers ACT policy work. A key focus of Bill's work will be on the inclusion of, and support for carers, during the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

ACT NEWS

Paths of Healing – New Publications by ACT Health Directorate

The following new ACT Health (mental health) publications are now available:

Guide to mental health recovery

Your Advance Agreement

Your Keeping Well Plan.

These publications may be accessed [here](#).

Mental Health Community Coalition ACT: Consumer Carer Caucus

Some important dates for your diary:

The next Consumer Carer Caucus meeting will be held on Friday 30 November 2012, 11.30 – 1.30pm, Griffin Centre, Canberra City, MHCC meeting room, level 1. All consumers and carers are welcome to attend Caucus meetings.

The Caucus AGM will be held on Tuesday 27 November, 2.15pm, Griffin Centre, Canberra City, MHCC meeting room, level 1. This is the meeting where Caucus members get to elect consumer and carer representatives on the MHCC Board.

There are two positions as carer representatives and one position as a consumer representative vacant this year, and the Coalition strongly encourages you to consider nominating or to encourage others to nominate.

Please RSVP for both events to Sophie Fehlberg, mhccact@mhccact.org.au or 6249 7756.

Financial Information Service Seminars by Department of Human Services

The Financial Information Service provides a range of free educational seminars to help you secure your financial future. The seminars are for ages 55 and under, 55 – 64 years and 65+ years. The range of seminars provided locally will vary from time to time. Click [here](#) for the brochure including more information, times and dates.

Lifeline Canberra conference Building Community Resilience 30 November

Would you like to make a difference in the community by helping to reduce the stigma around Mental Health? Are you interested in learning more about suicide prevention, and what you as an individual, or as an organisation can do to make a difference? Have you ever wanted to learn practical skills on how to communicate with somebody in a crisis effectively, whether it be at work or in your personal life?

If you answered yes to any of the above, then join Lifeline Canberra at their conference *Building Community Resilience* on Friday 30 November. For more information on the website click [here](#) or contact the training team on 6247 0655 or email training@act.lifeline.org.au

Chronic conditions seminar series

Stress less and live healthy. Learn different strategies and techniques to reduce stress and increase your general wellbeing. Presenters are

Eleonora and Linda, Peers for Recovery Program, Mental Health Foundation.

Date: 15 November 2012

Time: 7.00pm – 8.30pm

Location: SHOUT Building 1, Pearce Community Centre, Collett Place, Pearce

These seminars are aimed at anyone who has a chronic condition, however, if you are a carer or interested in this series you are welcome to attend. For more information contact the SHOUT office on 6290 1984.

Canberra Remembers Lives Lost to Suicide

The Remembrance Ceremony will be held Saturday 17 November at 2pm at Weston Park in Yarralumla.

There will be signs to follow on the day. Click [here](#) to access the flyer. For information on after suicide support in the ACT click [here](#).

Applications open for new community mental health funding – PHaMS receive \$154 million

Community organisations can apply for funding to employ new workers to help people with mental illness, including by helping them find and keep a job. Funding is available for about 230 new community mental health workers under the next stage of the Australian Government's \$154 million expansion of its successful *Personal Helpers and Mentors* initiative. The new personal helpers and mentors will include workers to provide intensive support to people with mental illness on income support, to help them tackle social and personal barriers preventing them from finding and keeping a job. Click [here](#) to read the full media release.

Carers or family members can refer to PHaMS on behalf of their loved one, if there is consent

to do so (or they can assist in making the initial contact). A person does not necessarily have to have a clinical manager to be eligible for PHaMS, as do many other ACT mental health programs. You can access more information about PHaMS [here](#) and a PHaMS referral form [here](#).

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. We look at the alcohol and other drug issues affecting their loved one, and how someone else's addiction impacts on your own lives. 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.

Date: Every second Wednesday (next session Wednesday 14 November)

Time: 5:30pm - 7:30pm

Location: Directions, 1 Bradley Street, Woden
Compass is facilitated by a Directions counsellor and a trained Alcohol & Other Drug worker. No bookings are required. For further information contact Directions on 6122 8000.

Tandem House, 666 ABC, "SPRUCE UP"

Tandem House has been chosen as the not for profit organisation for this year's 666 ABC "Spruce Up". "Spruce Up" is being held on 1 December commencing 6.00am with Saturday radio presenter Greg Bayliss, his partner in crime Graham 'Willo' Williams, the ABC crew, and Tandem staff. Volunteers and locals are

welcome to join in for a fun filled morning of activity. Or, if gardening isn't your style, please consider donating resources (see the list on the 666 ABC website) that will assist in "Spruce Up". For further information contact Tandem's office on 6287 2870 or visit the website [here](#). To sign up as a volunteer visit the 666 ABC website [here](#).

NATIONAL NEWS

Making a National Disability Insurance Scheme Real

Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Minister for Disability Reform Jenny Macklin gave a speech at the National Press Club to announce that the legislation for the NDIS will be put to parliament within weeks, to prepare for the implementation of launch sites from July 1 next year. Minister Macklin said the legislation would be introduced in the last parliamentary sitting week of this year, which starts on November 26. The legislation will be referred to a committee before returning to the parliament early next year for debate. Importantly, we also have confirmation that people deemed to have a psychosocial disability, such as a mental illness, will be given access to the NDIS. Click [here](#) to read a transcript of Minister Macklin's speech.

Suicide support line 1800 859 585 now available around the clock

Minister for Ageing and Mental Health Mark Butler has announced a phone line funded by the Australian Government will operate 24 hours a day to provide urgent assistance to people at risk of suicide who are participating in the Access to Allied Psychological Services program (ATAPS). "This is a little different from

services like Lifeline because it is designed to support clients and clinicians that are part of our ATAPS suicide prevention service which helps those who have been identified as ‘at risk’ of suicide and are receiving psychological services,” Minister Butler said. The support line **1800 859 585** is available to clients of ATAPS Suicide Prevention Services which were rolled out nationally from 1 July 2011.

There is also a general Suicide Call Back Service that provides counselling to people at risk of suicide, their carers and people bereaved by suicide by calling **1300 659 467**. And, Lifeline is contactable 24 hours a day, seven days a week on **13 11 14**. Click [here](#) to read the full media release.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men’s sheds share in new funding

Twenty-six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men’s Sheds and groups, located in every mainland state and the Northern Territory, have won grants for their local community activities in a special \$125,000 funding round. “These grants will help the great work of the sheds, particularly in remote communities where few jobs or activities may be available for some men,” Minister for Indigenous Health Warren Snowdon said. “Men’s Sheds and men’s groups provide a safe, friendly and inclusive environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males can connect with their elders and work on traditional and cultural activities. Click [here](#) to read the full media release.

Supporting older supported employees in retirement

The Australian Government will provide \$1.2 million to support older employees working in Australian Disability Enterprises transition into retirement. Addressing the National Disability Services Employment Conference in Adelaide, Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers Senator Jan McLucas announced the new funding will support older supported employees who no longer want to work to move into retirement. Click [here](#) to read the full media release.

Public Health Association Australia – National Social Inclusion and Complex Needs Conference

Abstracts are now being accepted for the National Social Inclusion and Complex Needs Conference.

The conference will be held at the Hotel Realm Canberra, 13 – 15 April 2013. For more information and to submit an online abstract, click [here](#).

Standing Council on Health

Australian Health Ministers met in Perth on 9 November for a meeting of the Standing Council on Health. The Health Ministers endorsed the revised Mental Health Statement of Rights and Responsibilities which has been prepared following a 12 month national consultation process to update the original Statement. Read more [here](#).

Kids urged to be bold and stop bullying

Bullying is back in the spotlight, with the national bullying prevention campaign Be Bold and Stop Bullying. The initiative is a collaboration between the Australian Government, Facebook, Headspace – Australia’s National Youth Mental Health Foundation – and

Project Rockit, an interactive anti-bullying and youth leadership program for young people in schools and universities. Read more [here](#).

Australian Government targets social media bullies

An estimated 11 million Australian Facebook users stand to benefit from an anti-cyber bullying campaign, supported by the Australian Government, to tackle harassment by some social media users. This campaign, being rolled out in partnership with Facebook, seeks pledges from social media subscribers – including students – to counteract bullying in an online world. A key feature of this campaign is a “Social Pledge App.” This app supports, broadcasts and helps store public statements from end-users, confirming that they don’t support bullying. Read more [here](#).

Homeless figures a wake-up call for action

The not for profit sector is alarmed at the latest national homelessness figures describing them as a wake-up call for urgent action. The Australian Council of Social Service has called for a concerted national effort to address the worsening problem. According to estimates of the prevalence of homelessness released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics the rate of homelessness in Australia was 49 persons for every 10,000 persons in the 2011 Census, up 8% from 45 persons in 2006.

“Clearly we are not doing enough to deal with homelessness. The latest figures are a wake-up call that one of the principal ways to deal with homelessness is to take measures to tackle the nation’s affordable housing crisis, which is

causing so much strain and forcing people into poverty,” ACOSS CEO Dr Cassandra Goldie said. Read more [here](#).

Mental Health Survey of Australian Doctors

beyondblue, is about to launch a national survey described as a world-first project to assess the mental wellbeing of Australia’s doctors and medical students. The organisation says the National Mental Health Survey of Doctors and Medical Students will offer an unprecedented insight into the mental health of those who are on the frontline of treating people with conditions such as depression and anxiety. “It comes amid growing concern about the impact of long hours and stressful working environments on doctors’ mental health,” *beyondblue* CEO Kate Carnell AO said. Read more [here](#).

Research: Mental Health Checkup –one of the nation's biggest surveys of rural and regional mental health is about to start

It will be one of the biggest studies of its size in Australia, and is being undertaken by the University of New England. It is a large scale biological, medical and social study of mental health in rural and regional areas, and is funded through a \$4.8 million grant from the Australian Government. Professor Chris Sharpley is the project leader. Listen to an interview with Professor Sharpley [here](#). To find out more about the study contact the University on 6773 3700 or email ROMHAR@une.edu.au

Research on social group stereotypes in Australia – Stigma attached to mental illness

Perth-based mental health researchers have launched a survey to analyse the dominant

attitudes toward people with mental illness in Australia. Stigma attached to mental illness is well-known to be a major, if not leading, barrier to individuals accessing, and remaining in, effective treatment programs. The Australian Mental Health Commission reports that people with mental illness are “one of the most marginalised groups in our community” and three out of four will report feeling stigmatised. The survey is a joint initiative between the North Metropolitan Health Service – Mental Health, and the University of Western Australia School of Psychology. It will also assess how Australians view different social groups to improve understanding of how negative and positive stereotypes develop. Read more [here](#).

You can take part in the research by accessing the survey [here](#).

Patrick McGorry: Governments lagging on mental health promises

One of Australia's leading mental health specialists says governments are moving dangerously slowly on their promises for better treatment. In last year's budget the Federal Government promised \$2.2 billion for mental health reform including money for early prevention. Early Psychosis Prevention Intervention Centres were part of the plan, designed to detect and treat mental illness in young people. State and territory governments have been asked to co-fund them. But former Australian of the Year Patrick McGorry says results are not coming fast enough and adolescents with mental illnesses cannot afford to wait. Read more [here](#).

World-first study tests diet, depression link

Victorian researchers are conducting what is believed to be the world's first clinical study of whether an improved diet can help people suffering from major depression. Scientists at Deakin University, St Vincent's Hospital and Barwon Health are recruiting 200 people in Melbourne and Geelong to take part in the study. Associate Professor Felice Jaka says the researchers will look at whether a Mediterranean and red meat diet can alleviate depressive symptoms. "Diet quality seems to be related to the risk of depression and anxiety," she said. "But of course a different question is: if you are already depressed, does improving your diet actually help?" Read more [here](#).

Mental health laws: the pros and cons of coercive treatment – Radio National Life Matters

The ACT, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia are all updating their mental health acts, and one issue that's being looked at in particular is under what circumstances should the law allow the involuntary detention and treatment of people with mental illnesses. Radio National talked to a law expert, a psychiatrist, a woman who has experienced coercive treatment, and the mother of two sons with schizophrenia to ask what their view is on how and when the provisions for coercive treatment should apply. To listen to this interview click [here](#).

Those at most risk and needing psychiatric help struggle to get mental health hospital beds

South Australia is lagging behind the modern world in its provision of mental health hospital beds, the state's peak medical group says. This is especially noticeable for people in need of 24-hour care who are a risk to themselves and

others. Figures from the Australian Medical Association (AMA) show the European average of all categories of mental health beds was 44 beds per 100,000. Australia has only 30.8 beds per 100,000. For the 18 to 64 age group in SA, the number of acute mental health beds (21 per 100,000 population) was significantly lower than the national average of 24.2 per 100,000. AMA(SA) president Dr Peter Sharley said SA was the only state in Australia reducing acute mental health hospital beds within general hospital settings. Read more [here](#).

New website to support seniors online

Older Australians now have greater access to training resources and information to help them get online with the Australian Government's new Broadband for Seniors website. NSW Labor Senator Doug Cameron launched the website at the *2012 Australian Computer Conference for Seniors* in Sydney. The Acting Minister for Families, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs, Brendan O'Connor, said the revamped web resource will provide seniors with more online learning tools to help them use the internet, as well as providing kiosk hosts and volunteer tutors with additional resources. Read more [here](#).

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 reflect the opinions and views of Carers ACT.