

## E Bulletin – 29 November 2012

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### Mental Health Carers Voice

#### National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum: VACANCY

Carers ACT is seeking nominations from ACT mental health carers to become members of the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF). The NMHCCF provides a key national, independent, mental health consumer and carer voice. There are current vacancies for one carer representative, and one carer to act as a proxy.

Visit [www.carersvoice.com.au](http://www.carersvoice.com.au) for information about the roles and responsibilities, position description, selection criteria, and supports including remuneration. For information about the NMHCCF, visit <http://www.nmhccf.org.au/>. Enquiries may be directed to Doris Kordes, Carers ACT, by phone 6296 9900 or email [mhcarers@carersact.org.au](mailto:mhcarers@carersact.org.au).

#### Carers Column: Call for Contributions from Mental Health Carers

Would you be interested in contributing to a regular Carers Column in E-Bulletin? Written contributions are welcome from carers on topics close to your heart. These could include policy matters, current mental health issues and other concerns. Contributions that reflect your creative and/or intellectual interests, hobbies, community activities, are also welcome. Enquiries (and contributions) should be directed to Doris Kordes, Mental Health Carers Policy Officer, by email at [mhcarers@carersact.org.au](mailto:mhcarers@carersact.org.au), or phone 6296 9900.

#### Mental Health Carers Voice Policy Officer Report

Another new feature of E-Bulletin, commencing in this edition, are regular reports from the MHCV Policy Officer, Doris Kordes:

- Care without Coercion conference, Sydney, 14 November. This event was organised by inside out and associates. The audience were treated to

outstanding presentations from international and national experts.

- Mental Health Carers Voice Forum, 20 November: Common Ground. This forum on supported accommodation was well-attended and presenters engaged the audience in a lively discussion.

To read Doris's report on the Care without Coercion event and the Mental Health Carers Voice Forum, including links to more information, click [here](#).

#### **Invitation to participate: supported accommodation project**

John Tucker, a carer representative with the Mental Health Carers Voice program, also presented at the recent Forum on the Common Ground model. John is inviting interested members of the community to participate in a workshop he is organising for mid-December: to discuss and obtain ideas on the best way forward to facilitate quality, safe, secure and affordable supported accommodation options for people with mental illness and their families living in the Tuggeranong- Southside Region of Canberra. A copy of the invitation may be accessed [here](#). The project overview may be accessed [here](#).

#### **The Mental Health Carers Voice Online Discussion Forum**

If you are a mental health carer, you are invited to comment, question, or add your voice to any discussion topics that appeals to you. The Mental Health Carers Voice Online Discussion Forum is a moderated forum. This means that it will take a little while for your posts to appear. Don't worry about this. So long as they follow our simple guidelines, they will appear. To go to the Carers Voice Discussion Forum, click [here](#). To read the Discussion Forum Guidelines, click [here](#).

**NB.** All information given on the Discussion Forum is opinion and lived experience. Carers ACT cannot vouch for, nor be held responsible for, its accuracy.

## **CARERS ACT**

#### **The Cottage and Fraser House closing and opening dates for Christmas 2012**

Fraser House is closing 21 December 2012 at 4.00pm, and reopening 2 January 2013 at 9.00am.

The Cottage is closing 23 December 2012 at 9.00am, and reopening on 2 January 2013 at 9.00am.

#### **Northside Mental Health Carers Support Group**

**Date:** Tuesday 11 December 2012

**Time:** 5.00pm – 7.00pm

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

Further information: [rsvp@carersact.org.au](mailto:rsvp@carersact.org.au) or call Eleanor on 6296 9908.

### **Who Cares — Carers' Walking Group**

This weekly walking group is registered with the National Heart Foundation and organised by a group of Carers. The group meets in the Hub and heads off around 10.15am for a 30-45 minute walk. Afterwards have a coffee and a chat. There will be no walk between Xmas and New Year.

**Dates:** Friday mornings

**Time:** Meet at 10.00am for a 10.15am start

**Location:** Carers ACT, 80 Beaufort Crescent, Holt

No need to register in advance, just turn up and register with Margaret on your first walk.

### **Carers Australia — New Young Carer Video!**

Carers Australia has produced a video highlighting that while young carers have similar interests to their peers, they also have the added responsibility of a caring role. This video was premiered at the Carers Week launch by Carers Australia President, Tim Moore. We encourage you to view the video via our [YouTube Channel](#).

### **Mental Health Carers Respite - 1800 052 222**

The Mental Health Carers 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)

### **Counselling at Carers ACT — Supporting Family Carers — 1 800 242 636**

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**

### **Clemente Canberra: Free-of-charge university program**

Clemente Canberra, a free-of-charge university program offered by the Australian Catholic University in partnership with St Vincent de Paul Society, is now enrolling students into the two mainstream Clemente University programs for 2013, the Certificate in Liberal Studies Program and the Pathways (bridging) Program. Students must be 18 or over, and priority is given to those who have suffered trauma or major setback in their life caused by mental illness, disability, addiction, unemployment, homelessness, family breakdown, and other such disadvantage. You can access the brochure [here](#).

There are only 25 places available on each of the two programs and as a significant number of people have already enrolled, it is important

that prospective students, or their representative, contact the Clemente Canberra Coordinator, Robyn Keech, as soon as possible on mobile 0418 714 835, phone 6234 7358 or email [robyn.keech@smdp-cg.org.au](mailto:robyn.keech@smdp-cg.org.au).

### Lifeline Canberra's Accidental Counsellor training

The Accidental Counsellor training is a two day workshop that provides participants with fundamental skills in crisis support counselling and dealing with difficult clients and situations. The course also covers topics such as dealing with people who are angry, highly distressed or experiencing effects of a mental illness.

**Dates:** Thursday 6 and Friday 7 December

**Cost:** The standard rate for the Accidental Counsellor course is \$400 per person or \$360 per person for not-for-profit organisations and pension card holders.

For further information on these courses or to download a registration form go to the Lifeline website [here](#) or contact the Lifeline Training team by phone on 6247 0655 or email [training@act.lifeline.org.au](mailto:training@act.lifeline.org.au).

### IF, Canberra's Inclusion Festival celebrates I-Day

IF, Canberra's Inclusion Festival celebrates I-Day (the International Day of People with disability) by presenting an exciting program of exhibitions, performances and events

welcoming and featuring differently abled people in a festival of possibility. For more information and to access the program of events flyer, click [here](#).

### Celebrating International Day of People with a Disability Expo

This year's Expo and Market to celebrate International Day of People with Disability is being held at Albert Hall on Saturday 1 December. This is an opportunity for people with disability to showcase their talents, interests and skills to the Canberra community. It also provides the opportunity for groups and service providers to demonstrate how their programs can enrich the lives of people with disability.

For more information you can access the website [here](#).

### SMART Recovery

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. All Directions SMART Recovery facilitators are trained by, and registered with SMART Recovery Australia.

Dates and times: Tuesdays 10.30am – 12.00pm

Wednesday 5.30pm – 7.00pm

Location: 1 Bradley Street, Woden

No bookings required.

For further information contact Directions on 6122 8000. Last session for 2012 will be held Wednesday 12 December.

### Women's Singing For Fun

The YWCA of Canberra invites all women to come and join this brand new group. We will sing songs of hope, peace, love and courage from a range of musical traditions. We will also create our own songs to sing. The group will suit all levels of experience and will be easy, uplifting and fun.

**Date:** Thursdays (during school terms)

**Time:** 1.30pm – 3.00pm

**Location:** St Margaret's Uniting Church Hall (behind the church), Antill Street, Hackett

No registration needed so come and join us.

For more information contact Merrilyn on 6173 7100 or [merrilyn.simmons@ywca-](mailto:merrilyn.simmons@ywca-canberra.org.au)

[canberra.org.au](http://canberra.org.au)

### ACT Disability Services Commissioner's Film Festival

The ACT Disability & Community Services Commissioner invites you to celebrate International Day of People with a Disability at a gala short film event. A selection of the best short films from the *Other Film Festival 2012*: *The Australian film festival committed to changing how everyone thinks about disability.*

**Date:** Monday 3 December

**Time:** 6.00pm – drinks, canapés and live entertainment in the NFSA Courtyard

7.00pm – screening of films begins

**Location:** National Film & Sound Archive, McCoy Circuit Acton ACT

This is a fully accessible and inclusive event. Speeches will be Auslan interpreted. All films are captioned and audio described and the National Film & Sound Archive is a fully accessible venue.

This is a free event but *RSVP's are essential*. To RSVP call 02 6248 2000 and please advise of any accessibility requirements.

### Mental Health Justice Health Alcohol and Drugs Services Smoke Free Newsletter

To read the November Smoke Free Newsletter click [here](#).

### NDIS Draft Legislation

The most recent draft of the NDIS legislation and the overview that accompanies it has been released by the Government. To read the draft legislation, click [here](#).

### Campaigner Named as ACT's Aussie of the Year

Social justice campaigner and Australian Social Inclusion Board Member, Dr Tom Calma AO, has been announced as the ACT Australian of the Year 2013. The accolade comes just a few months after Dr Calma was awarded the Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in the Queen's Birthday 2012 Honours. Read more [here](#).

**Free 8 week quit smoking course - specifically for adults living with a mental illness**

This course starts next week at the Mental Health Foundation ACT's Rainbow program, and will be presented by Cancer Council ACT. The 'Fresh Start' course is designed to enable participants to develop an understanding of the role smoking plays in their lives and develop strategies to replace smoking and manage cravings and withdrawal symptoms. Participants will receive support, information and resources in relation to the quitting technique best suited to them. These sessions are designed specifically for adults living with a mental illness.

Date: Tuesdays from 4 December – 5 February (no classes 25 December or 1 January)

Time: 11.00am – 12.00pm

Location: The Rainbow, G Block, Canberra Technology Park, 49 Phillip Avenue Watson

For more information or to register, contact the Rainbow [rainbow@mhf.org.au](mailto:rainbow@mhf.org.au) or 02 6242 6575.

## NATIONAL NEWS

**World's first National Report Card into Mental Health and Suicide Prevention**

On 27 November 2012, the National Mental Health Commission launched its inaugural national report card : 'A Contributing Life: the 2012 National Report Card on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention'. Read the media release [here](#). You can access a copy of the full report [here](#).

Carers ACT has responded to the release of this report, as well as the Mental Health Carers Report 2012 (discussed below), by issuing a media release. You can access this media release [here](#). It contains quotes from Carers ACT CEO, Dee McGrath, who argues that these important reports highlight the essential contribution of mental health carers in the community, and how the role of carers should be better protected in amendments to the *Mental Health Act Care and Treatment Act 1994* (ACT).

**Recognition and Respect: Mental Health Carers Report 2012**

The Mental Health Carers Report 2012, published by the Mental Health Council of Australia, was launched by the Hon Mark Butler, Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Minister for Social Inclusion and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Mental Health Reform; Senator Jan McLucas, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers; and Jackie Crowe, National Mental Health Commissioner and mental health carer. You can access a copy of the report [here](#).

**New report released for Post Natal Depression Awareness Week – 19 November**

Further research into the economic impact of perinatal depression was launched in Canberra on 19 November by Minister Butler, as Post-Natal Depression Awareness Week activities kick off around the country. Mr Butler congratulated beyondblue on their new report, and highlighted the importance of providing

information and early intervention for new parents. Read the media release [here](#). You can access a copy of the beyondblue report findings [here](#) and the PANDA report [here](#).

### **Suicide of Older Men under the Radar**

The Royal Australia and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists is saddened by recent reports of the death of an 81 year-old in Perth, reportedly through suicide. 'Men over the age of 75 years have amongst the highest age specific suicide rate in Australia and yet there appears no effort to address this' said Dr Roderick McKay, Chair of the Faculty of Psychiatry of Old Age at RANZCP. Read more [here](#).

### **Expert Insights**

The latest edition of Expert Insights features Jack Heath and Sarah Coker from [SANE Australia](#) addressing the topic of suicide prevention. To read more click [here](#). You can also access the Living is for Everyone Newsletter 23 [here](#).

### **New Mental Health Court: WA**

Chief Justice Wayne Martin gives a speech as to why and how a new mental health court in WA next year will fulfil a major need, as he demonstrates with statistics drawn from other jurisdictions around Australia. Read the speech [here](#).

### **Sharing stories of recovery**

Mental health consumers shared their stories of recovery as Richmond Fellowship celebrated its 25th Anniversary in Tasmania. The Minister for Health, Michelle O'Byrne, unveiled 'I am not my illness', a book of stories and artwork by past and present clients of Richmond Fellowship Tasmania. Read more [here](#).

### **FASD carers carry heavy life-time burden**

In an Australian first, researchers have reached out to families and carers affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) to identify gaps in existing services. The research found that FASD carers are often stigmatised, find it hard to obtain a diagnosis and to access appropriate health services. Read the full media release [here](#).

### **Adults Surviving Child Abuse**

ASCA's *Practice Guidelines for Treatment of Complex Trauma and Trauma Informed Care and Service Delivery* present the collective wisdom of the last two decades of national and international research in the trauma field. You can access the guidelines [here](#).

### **Report to help tackle suicide in rural and remote areas**

A new report launched 20 November by Minister Butler has found that rural and regional communities face unique challenges in preventing and recovering from suicide. Mr Butler said the report — *Suicide in rural and remote areas of Australia* — confirms the need to address suicide in rural and remote Australia in a way that recognises the specific experience

of those communities. Suicide is devastating for families and communities, and rural, regional and remote communities face rates of suicide around 20-30% higher than in metropolitan areas, according to Minister Butler. Read the full media release [here](#). You can access the full report from the *living is for everyone* website [here](#).

#### **Mental health campaign launched**

More than a decade of Australian involvement in overseas conflicts might have sparked a hidden epidemic of mental illness among members of the military, Veterans Affairs Minister Warren Snowdon said. Launching a campaign on 20 November to encourage current and former service people to seek help for mental health problems, Mr Snowdon said about 50,000 Australians had served in the wars in the Middle East and Afghanistan over the past 10 years. Watch a video and read more [here](#). Read the media release [here](#).

#### **Consultation Paper for the Definition and Cost Drivers for Mental Health Services project**

The Independent Hospital Pricing Authority (IHPA) has released a consultation paper regarding the definition of mental health services for classification purposes. You can access the consultation paper [here](#).

#### **Research - Emergency services and mental illness survey**

How well do emergency services respond to help people with a mental illness? What support do they offer to family and friends? SANE are investigating this through a survey. To take part in the SANE survey, click [here](#). You can access the SANE website [here](#).

#### **Targeted Community Care (Mental Health) Program**

Community organisations across Australia can apply for Australian Government funding to provide support services for carers of people with mental illness to assist them to maintain their caring roles and improve their own wellbeing. The 2011–12 Budget allocated an additional \$54.3 million over the five years from 2011–12 to 2015–16 for new or expanded *Mental Health Respite: Carer Support (MHR:CS)* services to assist carers of people with mental illness. It is anticipated the rollout of new services will occur in February, June and August 2013. Read more [here](#).

#### **States Commit to Tackle Homelessness**

State and Territory Governments have agreed to enter into negotiations for a new National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. Minister for Housing and Homelessness Brendan O'Connor said Ministers at Select Council on Housing and Homelessness meeting in Brisbane agreed, subject to Cabinet processes, to enter into the negotiations. Read more [here](#).

### **Majority Support for Voluntary Euthanasia**

The overwhelming majority of Australians support voluntary euthanasia, according to new research presented at a Dying with Dignity Forum in Sydney. The national survey by The Australia Institute of 1,422 people found that 71% of Australians support the legalisation of voluntary euthanasia for people experiencing unrelievable and incurable physical and/ or mental suffering. Opposition to voluntary euthanasia was 12%, while 17% were 'not sure'. Read more [here](#).

### **New Report Shows Aussies Living Longer**

Older Australians are living longer and without profound disability, according to a new report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). The report, [Changes in life expectancy and disability in Australia 1998 to 2009](#), reveals that older Australians are getting more years of life without severe or profound limitations to their basic daily activities. Read more [here](#).

### **Jobless men at risk of suicide in boom time**

An Australian study of unemployment and suicide has shown that jobless men are more likely to take their own lives during times of national economic prosperity. Researchers believe the stigma of being out of work when the job market is buoyant increases the risk of developing mental health problems. Read more [here](#).

### **Australia's first national online mental health clinic announced**

Access Macquarie was announced as the provider of a new online clinic by Minister Butler during Mental Health Week in October 2012. The new online clinic provides confidential assistance to people nationally via the internet, phone or email. 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.*