

E Bulletin – 3 September 2012

CARERS VOICE

CARERS ACT

ACT NEWS

NATIONAL NEWS

CARERS VOICE

Mental Health Carers Networking & Consulting Forum Wednesday 12 September

Dr Johann Sheehan of the ACT Health Directorate Suicide Prevention Strategy will present on Let's Talk for Suicide Prevention campaign. LivingWorks and Lifeline will be promoting the ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Training) Course. ASIST aims to enhance a caregiver's abilities to help a person at risk avoid suicide (see page 4 for further information about the ASIST course). The Networking & Consulting Forum also provides participants with an opportunity to connect with carer representatives – to hear their reports, and to voice carer issues.

Date: Wednesday 12 September 2012

Time: 5.30pm - 7.30pm

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

RSVP: Monday 10 September 2012

Rosie.fisk@carersact.org.au or phone: 9296 9952. Light canapés will be provided.

Community Forum – Implementing a smoke-free policy in ACT Mental Health facilities Thursday 6 September

The Mental Health Community Coalition ACT and ACT Health Directorate invite you to this forum to learn more about plans to implement a smoke-free policy across mental health facilities in the ACT and to give feedback to ACT Health Directorate.

The purpose of this forum is to allow both ACT Health Directorate and consumer advocates to explain their motivations and concerns, to give people attending an opportunity to voice their views and to discuss ways to move forward.

Date: Thursday 6 September 2012

Time: 5.00pm - 7.00pm

Location: Meeting room 6, Level 1, Griffin Centre, 20 Genge Street, Canberra City

RSVP please contact MHCC on admin@mhccact.org.au, phone 6249

7756 or ACT Health Directorate on

Laura.Alchin@act.gov.au, phone 6205

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CarersACT

NEW monthly Mental Health Support Group in the Northside

Carers ACT will be starting a NEW monthly Mental Health Support Group in the Northside. The group will be held on a week day evening. We plan to hold an information session for interested carers in September. If you could be interested in attending such a group, please call Eleanor Kinloch on 6296 9908 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au.

Spring Seasonal Lunch

Spring into spring. Come along and enjoy an East meets West buffet style lunch with other carers.

Date: Thursday 20 September 2012

Time: 12.00pm - 2.00pm

Location: Family Food Court Restaurant.
Upstairs at 28 Woolley Street, Dickson

ON COURSE FOR CARERS: MONTHLY INFORMATION FOR CARERS - September Respite and Residential Aged Care - Process and Costs

Karl Jordt (Centrelink) and Camille (Carers ACT) will discuss the processes and costs of accessing residential care.

Date: Wednesday 26 September 2012

Time: 10.00am - 12.00pm

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

All events are free for current Family Carers who reside in the ACT.

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL: To RSVP call Eleanor on 6296 9908 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au

Carers NSW 2013 Biennial Conference

The Carers NSW 2013 Biennial Conference *Caring, Working, Living* aims to bring together health professionals, disability and other service providers, government representatives and employers, and provides an opportunity to explore practice and ideas, research and initiatives in carer support under the following streams:

- 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.

Call for abstracts is now open. Information and online submission is available by clicking on website link below. Abstract submissions close on 14 September 2012.
When: 14 - 15 March 2013
Where: Novotel, Sydney Brighton Beach
Details: See the [flyer](#) or [website](#)

ACT NEWS

NDIS - Eligibility and reasonable and necessary support

At its meeting on 25 July 2012 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) discussed a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and proposals from the Select Council on Disability Reform for how eligibility and reasonable and

necessary support under an NDIS might be defined.

As it stated in the communiqué from its meeting on 25 July 2012, COAG wanted people with disability, their families and carers, the workforce and disability sector and peak bodies to have a chance to comment on the proposed approach to eligibility and reasonable and necessary support under an NDIS. Your feedback will help identify if the statements make sense, or if they need to be changed before they are finalised.

A document has been produced to support this process. It outlines what the Productivity Commission said about eligibility and reasonable and necessary support, the proposed draft definitions, and poses questions which people might find useful to focus their feedback. To ensure that your feedback is considered in the further development of these descriptions your response is required by **COB 28 September 2012**. You can provide feedback via:

- your state/territory based NDIS Advisory/Reference Groups;
- the National Disability and Carer Alliance Engagement project;
- the NDIS 'Your Say' online forum (www.ndis.gov.au); or NDISenquiries@fahcsia.gov.au

Feedback will be used to refine these statements before they are finalised

and turned into the laws, information materials, policies and practices that will be needed to start an NDIS in 2013. You can access the full document [here](#).

Mental Health Week Launch

Mental Health Week this year runs from 6-13 October 2012. Mark the following day for the launch of Mental Health Week in your calendar: Tuesday 9 October 2012

Time: 10.30am - 1.00pm

Location: Canberra Rex Hotel, Northbourne Avenue, Turner.

You can access further information on mental health week via Mental Health Carers Voice [here](#) or the Mental Health Community Coalition [here](#).

Public lecture by Dr Joe Parks, Director of the Missouri Institute of Mental Health

The Mental Health Community Coalition ACT, in partnership with Community Mental Health Australia, proudly presents a public lecture by Dr Joe Parks, Director of the Missouri Institute of Mental Health. Dr Parks will present on the impacts of inappropriate prescription of psychiatric medications.

Dr Parks is an American psychiatrist who is well respected for his work on the physical health of people with mental illness. One of the crucial aspects of the physical health impacts of mental illness addressed by Dr Parks in his research is the impact of inappropriate prescription of psychiatric medications.

Date: Tuesday 11 September 2012

Time: Drinks and Canapés from 5:30pm

Location: Finkel Theatre, John Curtin School of Medical Research ANU Garran Road, Acton. Free Open Car Park on Garran Road adjacent to the venue.

\$10 contribution towards the event is appreciated. No cash accepted on the day, please pre-register for the event. To purchase a ticket for the event visit <http://mhccact2012.eventbrite.com.au/> Visit www.mhccact.org.au for more information.

Mind Insight

Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT) provides information and education to ACT schools and community organisations. It is currently recruiting for the last round of training this year. MIEACT training is highly regarded in the community sector and involves learning a range of communication and storytelling skills. Since 1993, MIEACT's primary aim has been to help young people in schools understand their own mental health and the mental health of their peers. Through the program young people gain a more positive attitude towards people with mental illness and their carers; develop an awareness of their own mental health and through this process overcome stigma. Also they will feel more empowered to seek help for themselves or their peers.

The only criteria to train as a MIEACT Volunteer Educator is to have a lived

experience of mental illness and to be prepared to share your story.

If you are interested or would like more information please contact Ben Matthews on 6257 1195 or ben@mieact.org.au

Working towards a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy

The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing has commissioned the Menzies School of Health Research to assist in the development of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy. In developing the strategy, the Research School is working with the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) to conduct national consultations. Throughout August and September, consultations, forums and meetings will be held across Australia. Indigenous communities and organisations, and people with an interest in improving Indigenous social and emotional wellbeing, are invited to attend. You can access the consultation overview flyer [here](#) and the the community forums consultation paper [here](#). You can access the website and locations of the consultations [here](#).

ASIST - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

ASIST is a 2-day interactive workshop in suicide first aid created by LivingWorks, an international suicide prevention training organisation. Participants learn to recognise when someone may be at risk of suicide and respond in ways that help increase their immediate safety and link them to further help. ASIST aims to enhance a caregiver's abilities to help a person at risk avoid suicide. It is intended that ASIST participants will be better prepared to:

- Reflect on how their attitudes and beliefs about suicide affect their intervention role;
- Discuss suicide with a person at risk in a direct manner;
- Build a collaborative approach to intervention focused on safe outcomes;
- Review immediate suicide risk and develop appropriate safeplans;
- Demonstrate skills required to intervene with a person at risk of suicide;
- Identify resources available to a person at risk of suicide;
- Make a commitment to improving community resources; and
- Recognise that suicide prevention is broader than suicide first aid and includes life-promotion and self-care for caregivers.

Date: Thursday 6 & Friday 7 September 2012

Time: 8.45am - 4.30pm over two days

Venue: OzHelp Foundation, Fyshwick
Catering: Morning and afternoon tea will be provided

Cost: \$280 or \$260 concession

Registration cut-off date: 30 August 2012

To register for this course or for more information, visit the website [here](#), or contact OzHelp Community Services on ocs@ozhelp.org.au or Phone: 6251 4166

ACT Disability Professionals Learning Network Presents

Mental Health First Aid is a practical and interactive program covering:

Developing mental health problems -

- Depression and anxiety
 - Psychosis and substance misuse
- Mental health crisis situations -
- Suicidal behaviour/thoughts and non-suicidal self-injury
 - Panic attack and after a traumatic event
 - Acute psychotic behaviour.

Participants will learn the signs and symptoms of these mental health problems, where and how to get help and what sort of help has been shown by research to be effective.

Date: Monday 29 October & Tuesday 30 October 2012

Time: 9.00am - 4.00pm

Venue: Southern Cross Club,
Tuggeranong Town Centre

Cost: \$150 per person

Price includes tea coffee, morning and afternoon tea.

Registrations close: COB Monday 24 September 2012

Free Parking. For more information please contact Doris Campbell on phone 6205 2412 or email doris.campbell@act.gov.au

Planning Ahead

Are you a carer concerned about what will happen when you are no longer able to do as much as you do now? Would you like some practical assistance in developing goals and plans for the future?

This is a practical course that aims to

- get people thinking and talking about their future caring options
- help participants develop plans and explore ways to implement their future plans
- provide practical advice about Guardianship, Wills and Enduring Power of Attorney.

Facilitator: Annette Matheson is a Community Educator with both professional and personal experience in the disability sector.

Date: 3 sessions (Mondays) - 3, 10, 17 September 2012

Time: 10.00am - 12.00pm

Venue: St Margaret's Uniting Church hall, cnr Antill Street and Phillip Avenue Hackett

Cost: Free

To register: 6207 3628 or CarerSkills@cit.edu.au

NATIONAL NEWS

Employment Environment 'Hostile' for Welfare Recipients – Report

The chances of finding employment are “seriously limited” for those currently living on welfare, according to major Church providers of social services in Australia.

A report from The National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM), commissioned by Anglicare Australia, Catholic Social Services Australia, The Salvation Army and UnitingCare Australia, shows that people receiving Newstart or Youth Allowance face levels of financial hardships that make finding employment opportunities difficult.

National Director of UnitingCare Australia, Lin Hatfield Dodds, said this group of people is looking for work in an environment that is inaccessible and even hostile. Read more [here](#).

Mental Health Consumer reference group moves forward

The Consumer Reference Group tasked with guiding the establishment of a new mental health consumer organisation met for the first time on 30 August. “The new organisation will be critical to the successful implementation of the Government’s \$2.2 billion National Mental Health Reform package,” Mr

Butler said. “It is critical that the voice of mental health consumers is represented to government in the delivery of new and existing programs and initiatives.”

Mental health consumers can already register their interest in the organisation through the website - www.mhconsumer.org.au. Read the full press release [here](#).

New \$7.5 Million Fellowship to Support Mental Health Research Open

Minister for Mental Health Mark Butler announced on 27 August that the new John Cade Fellowship in Mental Health Research is open for applications.

“The new Fellowship will support up to two outstanding researchers with funding of \$750,000 per annum for five years to drive innovative mental health research, especially in new and emerging areas,” Mr Butler said. “The anticipated breakthrough approaches and treatments will benefit the one in five Australians who will suffer from mental illness at some stage in their lives.” Read the full press release [here](#).

Rethinking our mental health laws

Even a cursory glance at Australia’s mental health system indicates shortcomings in the provision of a range of services to people with mental impairments. Since 1993, when the

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission conducted its National Inquiry into the Human Rights of People with Mental Illness, there have been a number of inquiries pointing to existing deficiencies in Australia’s mental health system.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Australia has ratified, requires the Australian Government to provide “those health services needed by persons with disabilities specifically because of their disabilities”. Read more [here](#).

Social Inclusion Report Card Revealed

Australia’s latest social inclusion report card finds that despite national prosperity, not all Australians are enjoying access to the same opportunities, with a significant group of people still missing out. The newly appointed Chair of the Australian Social Inclusion Board, Lin Hatfield Dodds, says the Board’s most recent report shows that while Australia is prosperous and faring well compared to other nations a small but significant group of people are still missing out.

Hatfield Dodds said the report, *How Australia is Faring*, shows homeless people, long-term unemployed Australians, people living with mental illness and other disability or a combination of all these things still struggle to move beyond debilitating disadvantage. Read more [here](#).

R U OK Day? Students to learn mental health crisis signs

The R U OK? Foundation is taking suicide prevention to the schoolyard, launching the new R U OK? at School program in Sydney. Minister for Mental Health Mark Butler launched the program, and said it would raise awareness of mental health issues. Mr Butler said the program will help Australian teenagers better support each other in the schoolyard and in the community. "Suicide is the leading cause of death among young people so clearly we have to find ways to help teenagers talk about the issues affecting them before those issues escalate," Minister Butler said. In the past five years, an average of 2,100 Australians have died by suicide each year, accounting for more than one fifth of deaths in that age group and more than transport accidents during the same period. Read the press release [here](#).

Patients beware: Drug companies increase prices for some brands of medicines

Minister for Health Tanya Plibersek has urged patients to shop around for their brand of medicine following price increases imposed by pharmaceutical companies on 85 brands of medicines listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). The brands of medicines, most of which were reduced in price in April following the Government's reforms

to the PBS, have had their cost to consumers increase by up to \$7.04 due to the pharmaceutical companies increasing a brand surcharge from August 1st. Read the media release [here](#).

Frontline training to stop job seekers living with mental illness falling through the cracks

Disability employment workers will be given the skills to identify and support people living with mental illness as a part of a new training program announced by the Australian Government. Speaking at Australia's Disability Employment Conference in Melbourne, Minister for Employment Participation Kate Ellis announced the Mental Health Capacity Building e-learning package. People living with mental illness are often excluded from the workforce, in part because of a lack of information so that as a community we can provide the support that's needed, Ms Ellis said. Increased awareness, understanding and training when it comes to mental health, and in this case the new training package will help frontline staff to be able to connect people with the services and support that is required. Read the full media release [here](#).

RESEARCH AND NEWS

Australian Community Sector Survey 2012 National Report

The Australian Community Sector Survey (ACSS) is the only annual national survey collecting data about the non-government, non-profit community

services and welfare sector. This sector is a major provider of the community services that most of us rely on at some point in our lives, but which are particularly important to people on low incomes. Some key findings where for people experiencing poverty and disadvantage in Australia, the availability of secure and affordable housing, and care and treatment for mental illness were reported as the greatest areas of need. The services that were least able to meet demand were housing and homelessness services, followed by legal services. Read a *Sydney Morning Herald* article [here](#). Read the full report [here](#).

Neighbourhood affects health

People who live in safer, cleaner and friendly communities experience higher levels of health and wellbeing as they age, a Flinders University study shows. Released last month, Neighbourhood Characteristics: Shaping the Wellbeing of Older Australians reveals a direct link between communities and the physical health, mental health and overall quality of life of middle-aged and older Australians. Read the full article [here](#).

Opportunity to participate in a local research project - Are you a carer of a person with chronic mental illness?

Consumer-centred models, such as Recovery, are now being implemented

into mental health services across Australia. This has led to many changes in the way in which these health services are structured and delivered.

The University of Canberra and the ACT Health Directorate are working in partnership to examine the way in which Recovery was implemented into the publicly-funded mental health service, and the outcomes of this implementation. The research is being undertaken in a number of stages. In this stage of the project, carers of the consumers of mental health services are being invited to share their thoughts and experiences of Recovery and the way in which Recovery principles have been implemented into the health services. The aims of the project are to evaluate outcomes of the implementation of the principles of Recovery into the mental health services of the ACT Health Directorate. This project is Stage Four of a larger project. The information that is gathered as part of this project will be used to improve the care and treatment received by consumers, and the support provided to carers, in the ACT. If you are willing and able to participate please contact researcher, Fiona Richardson, Masters of Clinical Psychology (student), University of Canberra ACT 2601 Ph: 0400 670 105 Email: fiona_richardson@live.com.au

Vietnam and Iraq: lessons to be learned about mental health and war

Physical injury and death in war is expected and large numbers of veterans are suffering major psychological trauma. These involve Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, alcohol and drug problems and sometimes suicide. Former soldiers, whether they fought in Vietnam or Iraq, are dealing with some common but distinct experiences.

Read *The Conversation* article [here](#). You can access the website of the Australian Government Department of Defence mental health area [here](#).

Anxiety linked to heavy cannabis use

Teenagers who smoke cannabis weekly or more are twice as likely as non-users to have an anxiety disorder in their late 20s, even if they stop using, a study of 2,000 Victorian teenagers has found.

Those who used frequently in their teens and continued to use on a daily basis at the age of 29 were three times as likely to have an anxiety disorder compared with non- or infrequent users. Those who used minimally in their teens but became daily users in their late 20s were two and a half times as likely to have an anxiety disorder

Lead author of the analysis, Professor

Louisa Degenhardt from the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre at the University of New South Wales, said that most studies looking at cannabis use and mental health outcomes focus on adolescence and early adulthood. "What we are seeing is a persistent association with anxiety disorders over a much longer period." Read more [here](#). You can access Professor Degenhardt's full paper [here](#).

Brains of people with schizophrenia are on 'red alert', study finds

New Australian research shows that the brains of people with schizophrenia may be under attack by the immune system, providing the strongest evidence to date of a link between immune function and schizophrenia. In 40 per cent of people with schizophrenia, increased inflammation was found in a part of the brain called the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, a key brain region affected by schizophrenia. To find this immune pattern in nearly half of people with schizophrenia raises the possibility that this is in fact a new root cause of the disease, says senior author of the study, Professor Cyndi Shannon Weickert. Read the full *Neuroscience Research Australia* media release [here](#).

Half of Aussie workers 'would rather quit'

Almost half of Australian workers would rather quit a job than deal with office tension, a survey shows. The poll, commissioned by suicide prevention

group RU OK? and conducted by The Centre for Corporate Health, found bosses often lacked the skills to discuss difficult issues. This was also adversely affecting the mental health of employees, to the point where 46 per cent of people surveyed would rather seek a new job than deal with a workplace issue. Read more [here](#).

To sign up (for free) to the Centre for Corporate Health – the author of this study – visit the organisation’s website here: www.cfch.com.au/research-and-insights.aspx. Once you sign up you can access their research and reports.

Bipolar disorder and creativity are linked

Does some fine madness yield great artists, writers, and scientists? The evidence is growing for a significant link between bipolar disorder and creative temperament and achievement. Read more [here](#).

Eating disorders to be more accurately reported

The Australian media will now be armed with a quick reference guide to more accurately and sensitively report on eating disorders and mental illness.

On 22 August Minister for Mental Health Mark Butler launched the new *Mindframe* quick reference guide - developed in

collaboration with eating disorder specialists and media professionals.

Mr Butler said the *Mindframe* National Media Initiative provided a valuable opportunity to help break down the stigma surrounding eating disorders.

“We know that the incidence of eating disorders in Australia is on the rise, and tragically we also know that eating disorders have a higher mortality rate than any other mental illness.” Read the full press release [here](#).

Parents with Mental Illness ashamed to ask for help - NFP Report

A new study by the national mental health charity SANE Australia, reveals that many parents with a mental illness raising children lack support from health professionals and school staff, and they feel ashamed to ask for help.

SANE Australia's study found that only about a third (31 per cent) of survey respondents have told their child’s school they have a mental illness and half of these found the disclosure unhelpful, leading to stigmatising by other parents and, in some cases, bullying of their child. Read the full article [here](#) and you can access the SANE Australia report [here](#).

Over the past 17 years, what has changed for people with a mental illness?

[SANE Australia](#) is a national organisation helping people affected by mental illness (consumers, their family and other carers), through education, applied research and campaigning for improved services and attitudes. You can read an interview with the former head of SANE Australia, Barbara Hocking OAM, who retired from the position after 17 years on July 13 this year, [here](#).

Calls to dispel myths about depression

There has been a call for further education to dispel myths about people's use of antidepressant medication. Advocacy group Beyondblue says survey results from New South Wales indicate many people remain misinformed about depression. 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 necessarily reflect the opinions and views of Carers ACT.