

## Mental Health Carers Participation and Representation Program E Bulletin – 6 August 2012

CARERS VOICE  
ACT NEWS  
NATIONAL NEWS  
RESEARCH AND NEWS

### CARERS VOICE

#### Consumer and Carer Participation Framework for MHJHADS – carer input invited

At the Executive Strategy and Business Planning Committee meeting on 6 August 2012 it was agreed that the Minute proposing a new Consumer and Carer Participation Framework for Mental Health Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services and a draft Terms of Reference for a Working Group to develop a new Consumer and Carer Participation Framework could be circulated to key stakeholders, including mental health consumers, Carers ACT and mental health carers for consideration and comment within a timeframe of two weeks.

Read the Minute [here](#) and the draft Terms of Reference [here](#). Please email your comments to Carers ACT at [mhcarers@carersact.org.au](mailto:mhcarers@carersact.org.au) by **Friday 17 August** to enable feedback to the committee secretariat in line with the agreed timeframe.

#### Executive Strategy and Business Planning Committee report

The following report of the 6 August 2012

meeting was provided by John Tucker, carer representative on the committee.

- The MHJHADS Governance Framework has been approved following consultation and consideration of feedback provided by key stakeholders, including Carers ACT and carers of people with a mental illness. MHJHADS will provide copies of the Governance Framework to stakeholders as soon as possible.
- A copy of a document outlining progress and outcomes against the priorities and targets of the 2011-2012 Business Plan will be provided for the next meeting.
- Preliminary work for the development of the 2012-2013 Business Plan has commenced and key stakeholders, including that consumers and carers will be given the opportunity to participate and provide input and comments in the plan's development.
- The ACT Health Directorate Reconciliation Action Plan for 2012-2015 has been approved. Copies of the Plan have been printed and are available from the Communications and Marketing Unit of the Directorate.

- The draft Treatment Guidelines for the initiation, maintenance and monitoring of consumers on Clozapine are to be referred to the Policy Committee for review and reformatting and linkage with the Clozapine Standard Operating Procedure.
- The draft Treatment Guidelines for Olanzapine are to be referred to the Policy Committee for reformatting and development of an appropriate flow chart outlining key processes to be followed.

### **Carer Representative Report - CAMHS Models of Care Redesign Steering Committee meeting**

ACT Government is starting the process of building a new Adolescent and Young Adult Mental Health Inpatient Unit at the Canberra Hospital. The main focus of the past two meetings has been discussing the “workflow” of this new inpatient unit. The workflow is documenting the sequence of how consumers, carers and health professionals interact, from when a person first arrives at the Canberra Hospital to when they leave. [PDF here](#)

### **CarersACT**

#### **Pre-election Launch**

On Thursday 2 August Carers ACT launched an election campaign to guests Chief Minister Katy Gallagher MLA, Joy Burch MLA (with responsibilities in Community Services and Women), Liberals Leader Zed Seselja MLA, The Greens Leader Meredith Hunter MLA and

Amanda Bresnan MLA, (with responsibilities in Health, Disability and Housing) and carers, supporters, allied sectors and community members. Four amazing carers shared their personal journeys each reflecting hardships and boundaries incurred over many years of caring concluding with a message of what they want. The carer stories highlighted four priority policy issues: Carers in general, supported accommodation, disability and mental health. The launch also promoted Carers ACT’s new website: <http://www.carersact.org.au/> which contains campaign specific information and resources: <http://www.carersact.org.au/get-involved/what-carers-want/>

Carers ACT CEO Dee McGrath said at the launch, “What carers want is to be seen, heard and recognised. We want to ensure that the members of the next Legislative Assembly make the necessary policy changes to guarantee that carers and their families get the support they need, when they need it.”

In March 2012 Carers ACT held a summit on Supported Living Options. You can access a film clip of the Carers ACT Summit [here](#).

#### **On Course for Carers Adult Mental Health Services, Agencies and Q & A**

With Christine Waller, Director of Adult Community and Older Person’s Mental Health Services

Date: Thursday 30 August 2012  
Time: 10.00am - 12.00pm  
Location: The Carers Hub, Carers ACT  
80 Beaurepaire Cres, Holt  
Free for Family Carers  
Bookings essential, to register please call  
Eleanor on 6296 9908  
or email [rsvp@carersact.org.au](mailto:rsvp@carersact.org.au)

### **Sydney Long: The Spirit of the Land - Private Viewing at the NGA**

An exclusive exhibition of Australia's  
foremost Art Nouveau painter.

Date: Thursday 30 August  
Time: 10.30am (Meet at the Information  
Desk at 10.15am)  
Location: The National Gallery of  
Australia  
Booking essential, to register please call  
Eleanor on 6296 9908  
or email [rsvp@carersact.org.au](mailto:rsvp@carersact.org.au)

## **ACT NEWS**

### **Did you know you don't have to have a clinical manager to be eligible for PHaMs?**

PHaMs stands for *The Personal Helpers  
and Mentors Program*. PHaMs supports  
people aged 16 years and over whose  
ability to manage daily activities and to  
live independently in the community is  
seriously impacted as a result of a severe  
mental illness. It is a key part of the  
Council of Australian Government's  
National Plan on Mental Health.

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 mental health  
programs in the ACT. You can access more  
information about PHaMs [here](#) and a  
PHaMs referral form [here](#).

### **New program 'takes hold' of youth homelessness**

ACT Minister for Community Services, Joy  
Burch, officially launched 'Take Hold' - a  
new ACT government-funded program to  
combat youth homelessness in the ACT.  
Ms Burch said the *Ted Noffs Foundation* is  
the provider for the mentoring, life skills  
and social enterprise service under the  
new Youth Housing and Homelessness  
Service model.

"Take Hold is an exciting addition to the  
new suite of youth housing and  
homelessness services in the ACT and the  
program will contribute to breaking the  
cycle of homeless through providing  
valuable life training skills to young  
people," Ms Burch said. Read more [here](#).

### **FREE weekly social bike rides**

The ACT Government Health Directorate  
in conjunction with Cycle Education is  
happy to offer FREE weekly social bike  
rides in the Lake Burley Griffin area led by  
a qualified cycling instructor (excludes  
school holidays). These are for ACT  
residents aged 18 and over who are not  
currently working and/or are Centrelink  
cardholders (e.g. health care card).

Starting Thursday 26 July 2012  
Time: 10.00 - 11.30am

Meet at the car park behind Mr Spokes  
Bike Hire, Lake Burley Griffin  
Free bike to borrow, if required  
Note: the weekly social ride joins the  
Reclink Australia Run, Roll or Walk on the  
last Thursday of the month. On these  
days, the group meets at the Carillion at  
10.45am for an 11.00am start

For more information, call Sommer  
Sherwood, Healthy Communities Project  
Officer, on 6205 7348 or email  
[sommer.sherwood@act.gov.au](mailto:sommer.sherwood@act.gov.au)

This activity is supported by the Healthy  
Communities Initiative, a joint Australian  
and ACT government initiative.

### **The Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service**

The Get Healthy Information and  
Coaching Service is a free ACT Health  
telephone coaching service staffed by  
qualified health coaches, aimed at helping  
adults to make lifestyle changes regarding  
healthy eating, physical activity, and how  
to reach and maintain a healthy weight.  
For further information call 1300 806 258  
or visit the website  
[www.gethealthy.act.gov.au](http://www.gethealthy.act.gov.au)

### **When caring gets you down, a course for family carers**

For many people, the caring journey is  
long and constant, and sometimes they  
wonder how they will keep going. This  
four session course, presented by the  
Skills for Carers Program, will consider:

- Understanding and managing the responsibilities of long term caring.

- Exploring the complex interconnectedness between stress, grief, depression and the search for resilience.
- Finding some balance for yourself and those around you and considering ways to move forward.

Facilitator: Jenny Thompson has worked in the Canberra community for over 25 years as a psychologist, counsellor and trainer. She has a special interest in mental health, trauma and grief, and how families find resilience in the face of adversity.

Dates: 4 sessions (Tuesdays) - 7, 14, 21, 28 August

Time: 10.00am - 12.00pm

Venue: DISH (Disability Information Support Hub), 60-62 Oatley Court, Belconnen

Cost: Free

To register: 6207 3628 or  
[CarerSkills@cit.edu.au](mailto:CarerSkills@cit.edu.au)

### **Bulk billing for counselling and psychological assistance now available in Belconnen**

BCS Counselling Service is now able to offer bulk billing for participants who have a Mental Health Care Plan from their GP and are holders of a Health Care Card. This means that there is no payment at all for these participants. BCS Counselling Service bulk bill Medicare directly for their appointments.

It should also be noted that participants without a Health Care Card, but with a Mental Health Care Plan, pay a gap fee, but they bill the rest to Medicare. At present appointments can be made within 1-2 weeks. Please contact Laura Summerfield if you need any further

information or referrals for the Counselling Service. Email [laura.summerfield@bcsact.com.au](mailto:laura.summerfield@bcsact.com.au) or phone 6264 0200.

## NATIONAL NEWS

### Mates to Drive Suicide Prevention on Construction Sites

Minister for Mental Health Mark Butler has announced \$5.24 million for a new suicide prevention initiative to be rolled out on construction sites across Australia.

Minister Butler announced the funding for suicide prevention program - Mates in Construction - at a construction industry conference in South Australia. Mr Butler said the program would build better connections between construction workers, mental health professionals and other organisations to offer support for people in these industries who are at risk of suicide. "Construction workers are up to six times more likely to die from suicide than accidents at work so clearly this is an area that needs our attention." Read the full media release [here](#).

### Preventing suicide and saving lives

Every day, at least six Australians die from suicide and a further 30 people will attempt to take their own life. Suicide is the most common cause of death amongst Australians aged 15-34. Australians are more likely to die by suicide than skin cancer, yet we know comparatively little about the processes that lead to suicide and how and when to effectively intervene.

Researchers at the Black Dog Institute at

the University of NSW, in partnership with the Brain and Mind Institute, Sydney University, the Queensland Institute for Medical Research, The Australian National University, and The University of Melbourne have been awarded a prestigious NHMRC Centre for Research Excellence award to determine how best to save people from suicide. Researchers from Otago and Auckland Universities are also involved. Read the full media release [here](#).

### The Partners in Recovery (PIR): coordinated support and flexible funding for people with severe and persistent mental illness with complex needs initiative

The PIR is a new and innovative program that aims to facilitate better coordination of and more streamlined access to the clinical and other services and supports needed by people in the target group who require a response from multiple agencies. It is being coordinated by Australian Government, Department of Health and Ageing. Suitably placed and experienced non-government organisations will be engaged as PIR organisations to implement PIR.

PIR aims to better support people with severe and persistent mental illness with complex needs and their carers and families, by getting multiple sectors, services and supports they may come into contact with (and could benefit from) to work in a more collaborative, coordinated, and integrated way. Read more [here](#) and you can access the Minister for Mental Health, Mark Butler, media release [here](#).

### **Suicide rates down over a decade**

The suicide rate in Australia has decreased by 17 percent over the past decade, from 12.7 to 10.5 deaths per 100,000 people, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Read the ABS media release [here](#).

### **ABS accused of putting a spin on suicide rates**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has been accused of misrepresenting national suicide rates, with leading mental health experts saying it has obscured a rise in deaths. The ABS yesterday hailed a 17 percent fall in suicides over the past decade, from 12.7 deaths per 100,000 people in 2001 to 10.5 in 2010. Read *The Sydney Morning Herald* article [here](#).

### **Professor Allan Fels speech to the National Press Club, Canberra 1 August**

This speech by Chair of the National Mental Health Commission, Professor Allan Fels AO, discusses Australia's First National Report Card on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. Read the full transcript of the speech [here](#).

Professor Fels highlighted that the National Disability Insurance Scheme should extend to people with mental disabilities as well as physical disabilities as the Productivity Commission recommended. "It is critical that it not only applies to persons with physical disability but also to persons with significant and enduring psychiatric disability," Professor Fels said. "There are many other persons with mental illness outside the proposed NDIS who need

care, treatment, support, accommodation, employment and other services." Read the full article [here](#).

### **National Action Plan on Mental Health 2006-2011: Fourth progress report**

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Action Plan on Mental Health 2006-2011: Fourth Progress Report covering Implementation to 2009-2010 was endorsed by COAG at its meeting on 25 July 2012. The report was prepared by the Mental Health Standing Committee of the Standing Council on Health. Read the full report [here](#).

### **Care Aware National Carer Awareness initiative**

Every day, 2.6 million Australians wake up to care for somebody else. It could be you, or someone you know. Unpaid family carers are our friends, relatives, siblings, partners and neighbours who provide full or part time unpaid personal care, support and assistance to people of all ages with disabilities, medical conditions, mental illness, frailty due to age and people who have alcohol and drugs issues. Carers make an invaluable contribution to our community and a profound difference to the lives of individuals every single day. In fact, the replacement cost of this care is estimated at over \$40 billion per year.

Care Aware is a national communications initiative that aims to raise awareness, recognition, support and appreciation of Australian carers. It's time Australia was Care Aware. Visit the website [here](#).

### House of Reps Inquiry into Mental Health and Workforce Participation

On Thursday 28 June 2012, the House Standing Committee on Education and Employment tabled its report on the inquiry into mental health and workforce participation entitled *Work Wanted: Mental health and workforce participation*. Read the full report [here](#).

Read the joint submission to the inquiry by Carers NSW and Carers Australia [here](#).

### Website to help Aussies manage anxiety

As more Australians turn to the internet for medical help, a new federally-funded website is offering tools and tips to those battling anxiety and depression. The interactive self-help website [myCompass](#) was launched by the Black Dog Institute and the federal government on Monday.

The developer, Professor Judy Proudfoot, says it's designed to help people suffering anxiety, stress or depression who may not seek help because of a lack of time, lack of access to face-to-face services or a fear of stigma. Read more of the *Sydney Morning Herald* article [here](#).

### Doctors, government at odds over mental health

Some patients are now paying more for mental healthcare when they visit a GP. A new survey suggests that the Federal government's decision to reduce the Medicare rebate for services under the Better Access scheme has resulted in doctors cutting back on bulk billing and charging higher co-payments.

In the 2011 budget the Federal government cut the rebates for GPs who devise mental health treatment plans from \$163 to \$126 or \$86 depending on consultation length. As a result the proportion of doctors bulk-billing patients for referral to psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists has dropped from 78 to 39 percent, according to the Australian Medical Association (AMA) survey. Read more of the *Sydney Morning Herald* article [here](#). You can also access the full report from the AMA [here](#).

### Call for flexible work hours for carers

The Federal government should change workplace laws to allow greater flexibility for carers, an independent review has found. But the review panel stopped short of recommending an appeal mechanism for workers whose employers rejected their requests for flexible hours to care for children, the aged or people with a disability. The report, released by Workplace Relations Minister Bill Shorten on Thursday, said the range of caring situations should be broadened. Under existing laws an employer can reject a request for flexible work arrangements – to care for children under school age and children with a disability under 18 years – on reasonable business grounds. These include such things as financial impact, efficiency, productivity, customer service and the inability to reorganise work among existing staff. Read more [here](#).

### Community Brave Website

Community Brave is a collaborative community project designed to eradicate online bullying, homophobia, transphobia and youth suicide. The foundation is targeted at youths and aims to create

change through support, education and social media. You can access the website [here](#).

## RESEARCH AND NEWS

### The brains of people with schizophrenia may attempt to heal from the disease

New Australian research shows that the brains of people with schizophrenia may attempt to repair damage caused by the disease, in another example of the adult brain's capacity to change and grow. Professor Cyndi Shannon Weickert, Dr Dipesh Joshi and colleagues from Neuroscience Research Australia studied the brains of people with schizophrenia and focused on one of the hardest-hit regions, the orbitofrontal cortex, which is the part of the brain involved in regulating emotional and social behavior. Read the media release [here](#).

### How immigration policy harms asylum seekers' mental health

Research has demonstrated that restrictive immigration policies of interception and deterrence have adverse effects on the health and wellbeing of the individuals they are designed to deter.

Mandatory detention has repeatedly been shown to have a substantial negative impact on the health of asylum seekers. The stress factors associated with indefinite confinement have been well documented. You can access the full article [here](#).

### Self Injury

There aren't many subjects that remain taboo, but the phenomenon of self-harm seems to be one of them. We rarely hear about it publicly, even though it's a disturbing problem that's growing among young Australians. ABC's Matt Wordsworth reports on one young woman who's battling the affliction and a pioneering school principal who's trying to teach young people the value of loving themselves. You can watch a video or read a transcript [here](#). You can access the full report, *Self-injury in Australia: a community survey* [here](#). (Please note this report contains information that may trigger behaviour)

### People with bad backs found more likely to develop mental disorders

THE 1.8 million Australians with back problems are more likely to experience psychological distress and mental disorders, new figures show. The figures were revealed today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) in a web-based snapshot of back problems. One in 11 Australians, or 1.8 million people, had back problems in 2007-2008 and were 2.5 times more likely to experience affective disorders such as depression, the data showed. Read more of *The Herald Sun* article [here](#). Read the AIHW media release and web-based snapshot [here](#).

### Mental illness-related language under scrutiny

Headspace, the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, wants TV, radio and print regulators to penalise those who use mental illness as a derogatory term.

Headspace's chief executive, Chris Tanti, has called upon authorities to reassess current press standards to address the use of words such as "nuts", "bonkers" or "crazy" in relation to those with a mental illness. Read more [here](#).

### **Anxiety and depression increase risk of sick leave**

Long-term sick leave is a burden for individuals and society at large, yet very little is known about the underlying reasons for it. Researchers at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, in collaboration with Australian and British institutes, have identified anxiety as a more important risk factor than previously thought. Common mental disorders such as anxiety and depression will affect one in three of us at some point in our lives. The core symptoms of mental disorders affect a person's emotional, cognitive and social functioning, which can impact on working ability. 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.***