

## Mental Health Carers Participation and Representation Program E Bulletin – 16 April 2012

CARERS VOICE  
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### CARERS VOICE

#### CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Directorate of Mental Health, Justice Health, Alcohol and Drug Services is leading a services reform agenda through six key projects:

1. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services – Young Adult Model of Care;
2. Improved care, transfer and discharge processes and planning;
3. Web based bed tool and cross divisional bed management;
4. Development of a true 24/7 inpatient unit;
5. A review of community team geographic boundaries, staff caseloads and Mental Health Assessment Generation and Information Collection System MHAGIC data accuracy;
6. Alexander Maconochie Centre Medication Management.

These are critical reform projects that directly impact on families' service experience in the mental health system. As such Carers ACT is seeking nominations from interested Carers who would like to be a MH Carer Representative on any of the six projects and/or the Steering Committee that oversees all six projects. Click [here](#) to download the nomination form, Code of Conduct, Selection Process Chart, Terms of Reference and Nomination Form – MH Services Reform and please return by **30 April**. The normal

process will apply; if there are more than two nominees for any committee, a panel will review the applications based on the individual's application.

#### Networking and Consulting Forums

However, all MH Carers will have a chance to be part of informing these service reform projects. Simply come along to any of the next six Networking and Consulting Forums, which will be co-hosted by the Directorate and led by Tina Bracher, Executive Director, Mental Health, Justice Health, Alcohol and Drug Services.

Details for the first forum are as follows:

**Date: Thursday 19 April**

**Time: 12pm – 2pm**

**Venue: Pilgrim House Conference Centre, 69 Northbourne Avenue**

**RSVP: Phone 6296 9952 or email [mhcarers@carersact.org.au](mailto:mhcarers@carersact.org.au)**

A light lunch will be provided. There is no charge to attend the forum.

The flyer for the event is available [here](#).

Helpful information about parking can be found [here](#).

### ACT Consumer Carer Caucus

The ACT Consumer Carer Caucus is an open forum for mental health consumers and carers in the ACT to meet, share information, form partnerships and be involved in the development and implementation of mental health reform.

In Caucus meetings anyone with lived experience of mental ill-health as a consumer or carer can bring items for discussion and have a voice on issues that affect consumers, carers and the mental health system.

In 2011 Caucus developed submissions on the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the review of the National Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, and developed several short papers on important issues such as Peer Support and Intake processes. Caucus has also provided valuable input into a range of MHCC ACT (Mental Health Coordinating Council) projects and on the MHCC ACT Board.

MHCC ACT would like to encourage anyone with lived experience of mental ill-health to come to a Caucus meeting to see what it is like and to have an opportunity to make their voice heard.

**Caucus meets on the third Friday of every month, 11.30am – 13.30pm in the Griffin Centre.**

**The next meeting will be Friday 20 April.**

For more information on Caucus please contact MHCC ACT's Simon Viereck on 6249 7756 or [simon.viereck@mhccact.org.au](mailto:simon.viereck@mhccact.org.au)

### ACT NEWS

#### Carers Climb a Tough Summit: Chronicle Article

This article discusses the experience of Diana Nasr, a family carer, and the Carers ACT Summit

on Supported Accommodation, which was held on 14 March this year. To read the article in full, please follow this [link](#).

#### Keeping Families Connected Program

Keeping Families Connected is a five week group program delivered by Carers ACT to assist families caring for someone with a mental health issue and/or a drug dependency. The program works with participants to develop strategies to cope with their caring role and to navigate the mental health system to find the supports they need. While the current program has already commenced and is therefore closed to new applications, interested participants can register their interest to take part in the next program by calling **1800 242 636** or emailing [rsvp@carersact.org.au](mailto:rsvp@carersact.org.au)

#### Carers ACT Response, Adult Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit at Canberra Hospital

In late 2011, Carers ACT developed a response to the proposed Models of Care (MOC) at the new Adult Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit at Canberra Hospital, which relates to the need to recognise the important role played by mental health carers in the recovery process.

To read the full response, follow this [link](#).

Carers ACT will be seeking progress updates from the Directorate of Mental Health, Justice Health, Alcohol and Drug Services on the implementation of the MOC.

#### Supported Decision Making Information Sessions

These information sessions are being run by the ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS) on the topic of supported decision

making and the possibility of developing a program in the ACT based on the experience of the South Australian Supported Decision Making Project. This project was the first in Australia to implement Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which relates to supported decision making for people with disabilities. The organisers believe that the South Australian project has strong applications in mental health and encourage all interested parties to attend their information sessions.

Sessions will be held on the following dates:  
**Thursday 3 May 4.30pm- 6.30pm ACT Legislative Assembly, London Circuit, Canberra City**

**Friday 4 May 2pm-4pm Belconnen Community Centre, Swanson Street, Belconnen**

More information on the event is available [here](#).

### **Step Up and Step Down Community Outreach: Transition to Recovery Program**

Step Up and Step Down is an intensive out-reach support program provided by Woden Community Service Incorporated. The service aims to support people transitioning from hospital (step down) and who may also require additional community support and recovery options if there are signs of relapse (step up). In cases where participants consent, the program managers are also interested in working with carers and families in order to “raise awareness of recovery and inspire hope for participants, their families, and communities.”

You can read more [here](#).

Alternatively you can contact Prue Gleeson, Jayne Tandle and Maree Fish on 6234 6839 if you would like more information about the Program.

## **NATIONAL NEWS**

### **Article: Does family intervention for adolescent substance abuse impact parental mental health?**

This article by examines the available literature on the impact of family intervention therapies on a family’s ability to cope with the stress of caring for an adolescent with substance abuse issues. While the results of the literature review are not definitive, the article concludes there are a number of positive effects flowing from group and individual family interventions. Some of the positive effects included mental health improvements for family members through the “reduction of stress symptoms, improved coping, improved family functioning, more effective parenting behaviours, attitude changes, perceived changes in relative’s substance use, and improved social support.”

The complete article is available [here](#).

### **Press Release: Minister Butler and Partners in Recovery**

Last year’s federal budget awarded \$549.8 million towards establishing the *Coordinated Support and Flexible Funding for People with Severe, Persistent Mental Illness and Complex Needs*. This program is also known as the Partners in Recovery initiative. In this statement, Minister Butler outlines the progress of the initiative so far, the work to be undertaken in the coming months, and the members of the expert reference group and the interests they represent. Mental Health carers will be interested to know that the interests of mental health carers are represented on this committee. The complete media release can be accessed [here](#).

### **Press Release: Funding to Improve Safety at Suicide 'Hotspots'**

The federal government has committed \$12 million over four years to undertake capital works which reduce the risk of suicide at known hotspot locations. The government has already allocated funds to Lifeline to establish phone counselling lines from previously identified hotspots. The media release is available [here](#).

### **Mental Health and Insurance Project Website**

The Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) and Beyond Blue have launched a website to assist people with mental illness and their carers to better understand insurance applications and policies. The website is designed to help increase access to insurance services and ease of use for people with mental illness; and to increase awareness regarding rights and responsibilities in relation to insurance applications and claims. You can find the website [here](#).

### **Mental Health First Aid Awards**

Mental Health First Aid Australia (MHFA) is an organisation providing training in how to support adults who are developing a mental illness or are experiencing a mental health crisis. The organisation was established in 2001, and this year MHFA are launching a series of awards recognising individuals and organisations who have worked to improve mental health literacy by supporting Mental Health First Aid Courses. Application forms are available [here](#).

### **Fathers and Mental Illness**

A study published on 16 April in the *Medical Journal of Australia* has found a need to recognise and support fathers with mental illness. The

research found that while some hospitals did regular check-ups of mothers at risk of depression, there was a gap in the way the system responded to fathers. The research also found that men with mental illness need support to help them parent their children successfully.

A news article regarding this report can be accessed [here](#).

The full research report can be located [here](#).

### **Information Technology and Mental Illness**

A new survey by SANE Australia has found that the internet and social media are important research and social tools for people with a mental illness. More than one-third of respondents stated that online programs and information sources such as MoodGYM, e-couch and Anxiety Online had made a positive difference in their lives. The study also found that social media services like Facebook and Twitter helped users remain connected with friends and family.

To read news coverage about this study please follow this [link](#).

The full SANE research report is available [here](#).