

Mental Health Carers Participation and Representation Program E Bulletin – 1 May 2012

CARERS VOICE
ACT NEWS
NATIONAL NEWS

CARERS VOICE

Networking & Consulting Forum held on 19 April – Mental Health Services Reforms

It was good to see a large turnout of mental health carers (n = 25) at this forum. A lively discussion was held with Ms Tina Bracher, Executive Director of Mental Health, Justice Health, Alcohol and Drug Services (MHJHADS). Feedback from participants was that they valued the opportunity to engage with Ms Bracher. Carers ACT staff took notes of the discussion, and a summary is available (click [here](#)).

The date for the next forum will be Tuesday 5 June at 12 noon at Riley Hall, Pilgrim House. The topic for this forum will be the MHJHADS reform project to improve care, transfer and discharge processes and planning. In addition, time will be set aside at the forum for carer representatives to report on current mental health committee activities. An agenda for the forum will be sent out closer to the time.

Training for Carer Representatives

A training program for carer representatives is being developed. This training will be of benefit to new carer representatives. Existing carer reps are also encouraged to attend the course as a refresher and to meet with other representatives. It is expected to hold the training in late May. Please email

mhcarers@carersact.org.au if you have any preferences or suggestions about the training format, time and venue. More information will be available in the next issue of E-Bulletin.

On-Line Discussion Forum: Mental Health Carers Voice – May

The Mental Health Carers Voice website will host an on-line discussion forum commencing in May, to provide carers with an additional avenue for contributing to mental health policy issues, including the current mental health services reforms currently underway. More information will be available in the next issue of E-Bulletin.

Input on Papers Requested from Mental Health Carer Representatives

Murray Haines has requested comments by 20 May on papers relating to fatigue policy. If you wish to provide feedback to Murray, please email them to mhcarers@carersact.org.au by the due date.

The documents are available [here](#) and [here](#).

ACT NEWS

CIT Skills for Carers

CIT Skills for Carers have some new courses starting in May:

FINDING BALANCE - A COURSE FOR FAMILY CARERS

Date: 4 sessions (Wednesdays) - 9, 16, 23, 30 May
Time: 6.00pm - 8.00pm
Venue: CIT Southside Campus, Ainsworth St Phillip
Cost: Free

UNDERSTANDING THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE AND GUARDIANSHIP - A COURSE FOR FAMILY CARERS

Date: Thursday 3 May
Time: 10.00am - 12.00 noon
Venue: St Margaret's Uniting Church, cnr Phillip Ave and Antill St Hackett
Cost: Free

PLANNING AHEAD - A COURSE FOR FAMILY CARERS

Date: 4 sessions (Thursdays) - 10, 17, 24, 31 May
Time: 6.00 - 8.00pm
Venue: CIT Southside Campus, Ainsworth St Phillip
Cost: Free

To Register: Phone Jenny Thompson on 6207 3628 or email CarerSkills@cit.act.edu.au. For more information about the courses, visit [here](#).

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.

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](#).

G.E. Shaw raise \$69,000 for Carers ACT



On Thursday 8 March the G. E. Shaw team pulled out all the stops and raised \$69,000 in their annual bowls fund raising event for Carers ACT. This is despite

it being a tough time for the construction industry and despite the threatening weather.

This is the seventh year of our relationship with G. E. Shaw and the results get stronger every year. The staff at G.E. Shaw run this event like a well oiled machine but that doesn't discount the hard work involved in getting such a successful event off the ground every year.

This year's funds will again enable us to identify and support families when their needs 'fall through the gaps' of government funding criteria.

We can never thank the G.E Shaw team sufficiently for all they do. We send them our heartfelt gratitude for yet another outstanding event.

On Course for Carers May-July

There are some fantastic events coming up at Carers ACT in the next few months; make sure you don't miss out!

May – Thursday 3 – 3 hours session on Change, Loss and Grief.

May – Wednesday 16– session in conjunction with Alzheimer's ACT on support and services for people living with dementia

June – Thursday 21 – Wellness Day – a fantastic 5 hour session (healthy lunch included) helping carers live a healthier lifestyle – including laughter yoga, information on sleep, relaxation session and more!

July – Thursday 19– steps into residential care - information session with staff from CACT and ACAT.

To register call Eleanor on 6296 9908 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au to book your place.

To view the flyer for this event please follow this [link](#).

National Recovery Framework Consultation

The First Consultation Draft of the National Mental Health Recovery Framework is being released in early May. National consultations are happening in May, and the consultation in Canberra is on 29 May from 2.00-4.00pm at the Conference Room, 11 Moore Street, Canberra. It is essential to register for this consultation to

secure a place. Information about the consultations is available [here](#).

Carers ACT has provided a response to the draft Framework. You can read the submission [here](#).

NATIONAL NEWS

Opportunity to inform the development of the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Report Card

The National Mental Commission is developing the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Report Card. Read more about the report card's development process [here](#). The commission is seeking feedback from people with mental illness, families and their carers through an online survey. Closing date for survey feedback is Tuesday 8 May 2012. The survey and more information is available [here](#).

The effect of red meat consumption on mental illness

A report in *Psychotherapy and Psychometrics* has found that eating too little red meat may make women more prone to depression and anxiety. These results stand in contrast to other reports that have linked excess red meat consumption to assorted health problems. The researchers noted however, that their results related to Australian, grass fed beef cattle which are high in nutrients.

To read press coverage of this study please follow this [link](#).

Should grief be considered a mental illness?

Professor Richard Bryant has been quoted on the SBS Insight program as saying that prolonged grief should be recognised as a new psychiatric disorder in cases where acute grieving continues

for longer than 12 months. Others however, have been critical about medicalising what has been described as a natural human process.

To read more about this issue, follow this [link](#). You can also watch short video on this page.

Poor mental health linked to pregnancy complications

Researchers have discovered that women experiencing significant mental illness were more likely to have higher-risk pregnancies, complicated deliveries and their babies were more likely to require special care. However, despite these complications, the women in the study all had successful pregnancies and delivers. Consequently, this study demonstrates the need to assist pregnant women with mental illness through a combination of psychiatric, obstetric and social work support.

Read more [here](#).

Exercise and youth depression

Researchers at the University of Nottingham are undertaking a study to examine the impact of structured exercise programs on young people with depression. While there have been many studies examining the link between exercise and improved outcomes for adults with depression, this study is specifically targeted towards young people.

More information is available [here](#).

Homelessness and the cost to government

The three year 'Michael Project' run by Mission Australia has found that it costs the Australian government more to leave people on the street than to help them. The project, funded by a

private donor, provided support to 250 men living in Sydney and found that the government saved \$3,600 for every person assisted.

To read more about the program, and to view related video and audio, follow this [link](#).

The Michael Project research report is available in full [here](#).

Early Intervention

Experts in Chicago have warned that early intervention is key in diagnosing and treating people with a mental illness. This article says that the best time to intervene is when 'subtle changes' first appear in a person's behaviour and personality.

Read the full article [here](#).

Mental Health in Australia

In April this year, La Trobe University held a forum on the issue of mental health care in Australia, and the potential findings and outcomes of the first National Report Card on mental health and suicide prevention which is due to be released at the end of this year.

The speakers at the forum include Professor Allan Fels, head of the newly established National Mental Health Commission; former Australian of the Year Professor Patrick McGorry, head of Orygen Youth Health and one of the National Mental Health Commissioners, and Barbara Hocking, Executive Director of SANE Australia. You can watch the video of the forum [here](#).

Remembering the cost of war

There have been a number of recent articles discussing mental health issues amongst returned service people.

Here are links to articles in [The Age](#), [Adelaide Now](#) and [The Australian](#).

Beyondblue launches new resources to address postnatal and antenatal depression

According to *beyondblue*, postnatal depression affects one in seven new mothers and almost one in 10 pregnant women. In response to this issue, *beyondblue* have released new resources to assist health professionals to identify and discuss depression and other mental health issues with pregnant women and new mothers.

To read more about this issue, please follow this [link](#).

To check out the new resources on the beyondblue website click [here](#).

To read Health Minister Mark Butler's press release on this issue, click [here](#).

Beyond Bushfires

Melbourne University is undertaking a survey of eight communities in Victoria affected by the Black Saturday bushfires. The survey is the first of its type in Australia to examine the medium to long-term mental health impact of a disaster.

To read more click [here](#).

Headspace: New Campaign

Headspace, the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, has a brilliant new campaign designed to reach young people. The ads reference vintage boxing poster to depict young people winning against issues common amongst young adults such as depression, anxiety and relationship breakdown.

To read more click [here](#). There are links at the bottom of the article that take you to YouTube where you can watch the ads.

The Headspace website is [here](#).

Simpson's actor discusses caring for his wife who has depression

In this article, Harry Shearer, who is the voice of Mr Burns in *The Simpsons* and also was in *This is Spinal Tap*, discusses his relationship with his wife Judith Owen who has experienced depressive episodes since she was 15 years old.

To read the full article, click [here](#).

Primary Mental Health Care National Conference

The Primary Mental Health Care National Conference will be held in Adelaide this year from Thursday 31 May to Friday 1 June. The focus of the conference is, "The Changing Landscape of Primary Mental Health Care". The Australian General Practice Network is convening this conference.

For more information follow this [link](#).

Community in crisis

In this article, which is accompanied by a short video, Russell Skelton of the *Sydney Morning Herald* examines the devastating impact of youth suicide in the indigenous community of Mowanjum in Western Australia.

To read the full article click [here](#).

Children and Mental Health

This report canvasses some of the current research relating to children's mental health, and



MENTAL HEALTH
carers
voice

Leading change and action with, and for, mental health Carers

stresses the need for early intervention and increased awareness.

You can read the article [here](#).

Consumers, Carers and Confidentiality

This is an excellent resource that discusses the concerns of mental health consumers and carers about privacy and confidentiality provisions.

The document is available [here](#).