



7 February 2013

E-Bulletin

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Mental Health Carers Voice recent news and announcements

Report from the Mental Health Carers Voice Policy Officer

Just a reminder that the closing date for submitting the [Mental Health Carers Voice Program Survey](#) is **Thursday 21 February**. The Survey includes sections for government and community organisations to complete as well as for carers and carer representatives. Your feedback will inform this program's ongoing quality improvements, so please take a few moments to complete the Survey. A copy of the Survey may be accessed [here](#).

A report on the Survey findings will be distributed via E-Bulletin during March 2013. Surveys may be emailed to mhcarers@carersact.org.au or posted to Carers ACT, Attention: Doris Kordes, 80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt ACT 2615. Please give Doris a call on 6296 9900, or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au if you have any questions about the Survey.

You may be aware that on 1 January 2013, all mental health facilities managed by the Division of Mental Health, Justice Health, Alcohol & Drug Service became smoke-free environments. Late last year mental health carers were invited to comment on the draft [Carers ACT Position Statement on the Smoke-Free Policy](#). We have received feedback on the Position Statement. The final version may be accessed [here](#).

Tune in to the next show of [Transforming Perceptions](#) on 2XX 98.3 FM Community Radio, with Aine Tierney and Doris Kordes (Carers ACT) interviewing Bruno Aloisi, Acting Operational Director, Adult Community & Older Person's Mental Health Services, Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services, on the role of mental health clinical services and what services they provide for people of diverse cultural background, and the mental health clinical services re-design project recently undertaken.

Date: Saturday 9th February 2013

Time: 2pm – 4pm

Click [here](#) for more information about *Transforming Perceptions*.

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Mental Health Carers Networking and Consulting Forums

Medicines and Mental Health Carers – 27 February

This is an important Forum on an important topic: according to the National Prescribing Service *Medicinewise*, more than 190,000 Australians are admitted to emergency departments each year for preventable medicine mishaps. A panel of guest speakers with a wealth of knowledge and experience on medicines issues will be available to provide information and to engage in a Q&A session with participants. Relevant resources will be available at the Forum.

In addition, the newly appointed ACT carer representative on the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum, Janet Milford, will be introduced to participants at this Forum, and will be available to talk to carers. This is an opportunity for you to connect with Janet and to let her know the issues that are important to you in your caring role.

Date: Wednesday 27 February

Time: 12.00pm – 2.00pm

Location: Riley Hall, Pilgrim House Conference Centre, 69 Northbourne Avenue, Civic

Cost: Free. Lunch will be provided

RSVP: Ph Rosie or Doris on 6296 9900; or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au.

Second Exposure Draft, Mental Health (Treatment & Care) Act –April

The Second Exposure Draft Amendment Bill of the Mental Health (Treatment & Care) Act will be available for comment from late March 2013, for a period of six weeks. Carers ACT will be hosting a consultation with mental health carers. The date and venue for this Forum will be confirmed in the next E-Bulletin.

Navigating the Mental Health System

Knowledge about how to navigate the mental health system is a huge issue for people who have just entered the 'system', but also for those people who may be unaware of the range of services and supports that are available for people living in Canberra. A panel of key organisations, and consumer and carer representatives will share information and provide resources. The date and venue for this Forum, list of guest speakers, etc will be confirmed in March.

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VACANCIES - Mental Health Carer Representative Positions

Mental health carers are invited to consider nominating for a carer representative position, through the Mental Health Carers Voice program, on the following committees and working groups:

Calvary Hospital Mental Health Management Committee

For more information about this Committee, click [here](#) for a copy of the Terms of Reference. Further questions about the role may also be directed to Chrissy English, Volunteer Services Manager, on 6201 6646 or 0467 790 863.

Health: Division of Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol & Drug Services (MHJHADS)

- Risk Management
- Smoke-Free Evaluation Working group *and* Smoke-Free Working Group (Community)

- MHAGIC (Mental Health Assessment Generation Information Collection) Advisory Committee

MHJHADS Redesign Projects

- Alexander Maconochie Centre Medication Management
- Steering Committee for the redesign projects

Community Sector

- Mental Health Community Coalition ACT: Peer Workforce Steering Committee.

If you wish to find out more information about the above committees/working groups, contact Rosie Fisk on 6299 9900 or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au. A Carer Representative Nomination Form, Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct for the Mental Health Carers Voice Program may be downloaded from the Mental Health Carers Voice website at www.carersvoice.com.au, or give Rosie a call.

If you are interested in participating, but would prefer to be a little less engaged, there are vacancies for alternate representatives for various committees. The alternate representative attends meetings when the carer representative cannot attend. If you would like to access the current list of committees please click [here](#).

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Carers Corner

Carers have responded to Mary's piece of writing featured in the E-Bulletin published on 24 January. Click [here](#) for a link to Mary's story. Carers written responses are as follows:

I agree strongly with what Mary has written. People with mental illness are offered the most inappropriate accommodation and no one seems to care. Similarly, I too have found that since the emphasis has been on the "Recovery Model" care for people with long term, serious, psychotic illnesses has deteriorated. Perhaps it is that their lack of progress might distort the success rate or perhaps clinicians brainwashed by "latest" methods no longer know how to cope with truly ill people.

'Clair'

I would like to totally concur with everything Mary has written in her well articulated article. My experiences are very similar to hers although my son is not living in Ainslie he is living in a complex by himself but with some dubious neighbours. He is not coping with self care at all. I have injured my back and can no longer clean for him. He is now living in an extremely unhealthy physical environment as well as his mental difficulties. So Mary's proposals need the 'thumbs up'!!

'Rowena'

Thank you *Carers Voice* for "Mary's story" about the lack of supported living for those with a serious mental illness. There are three options:

- There is HOME in Queanbeyan with wonderful people running it and about 20 self-contained apartments with support.
- There are Common Ground facilities for the homeless and those employed on low incomes, established by Kevin Rudd in every capital city except Canberra. Rosanne Haggerty set up over

10,000 such projects in the USA and wrote persuasively about Adelaide and Hobart.

(There is currently a Common Grounds project, *Common Ground Canberra*, underway in Canberra that has received support from the ACT Government and philanthropic organisations. You can access the website at <http://commongroundcanberra.ning.com/>. Editor's note)

- Lastly there is the L'Arche model where a parent or friend can set up a household of unwell and well persons, and provide appropriate support. See "[Odysseus' labours: a rehabilitation and recovery guide for those who have a mental illness and their carers](#)" by Paul Kauffman and Rupert Gerritsen. Could you please place this in the next edition of *Carers Voice*.

Paul Kauffman

Editor's note: for more information about supported accommodation options, check out the Carers ACT Report on the Supported Living Summit held in March 2012, available [here](#).

Proposed HOME(s) in Canberra

A small community group is working to establish affordable supported accommodation for people in Canberra with mental health issues. In mid December 2012 the group organised and facilitated two supported accommodation workshops in Tuggeranong to look at the best ways of addressing the supported accommodation needs of people with mental illness. The group is reviewing the outcomes of the workshops and believes it may be appropriate for a supported accommodation facility to be built in Canberra based on the highly successful HOME in Queanbeyan.

Carers and people who are interested in supporting this project should contact John Tucker by emailing ejohntucker@hotmail.com or phoning John on 6291 7869 or 0411 350 547.

It is suggested that carers and their families and friends read Father Peter Day's article published in the *Canberra Times* on Monday 28 January 2013 on mental health issues and the services provided by HOME in Queanbeyan. Click [here](#) for a link to Father Day's article.

John Tucker

Mental health carers are invited to respond to or submit articles for Carers' Corner. Please contact Rosie Fisk by phone, on 6296 9900, or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au.

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Carers ACT News

Day Trip to the Royal Canberra Show

Come and join us for a day at the Royal Canberra Show. Tickets and more information will be distributed to the event. Carers are to arrange their own transport to and from the show.

Date: Friday 22 February

Time: 10.00am – 3.00pm

Location: Royal Canberra Show, EPIC, Flemington Road, Mitchell

Education Session on Dementia and Alzheimer's

This session will be presented by Karen from Alzheimer's Australia. Topics will include: definitions; types and symptoms of dementia; effective communication; changed behaviour and strategies.

Date: Tuesday 26 February

Time: 9.30am – 1.30pm

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

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Private Viewing at the National Gallery of Australia

Stars in the River – The Prints of Jessie Traill

This exhibition celebrates the artistic career of one of Australia's most important printmakers of the twentieth century, Jessie Traill.

Date: Thursday 28 February

Time: 10.30am (Meet at the Main Entrance at 10.15am)

Location: The National Gallery of Australia, Parkes

The above three events are free for current carers who reside in the ACT. To RSVP call Eleanor on 6296 9908 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au.

An Opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Carers

Are you a carer of a loved one with mental health and perhaps drug and alcohol problems? A two day group session around caring for someone with some of these issues is being offered. This is a tremendous opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers to learn and share.

Dates: Wednesday 21 March

Thursday 22 March

Time: 10.00am – 4.00pm

Location: Carers ACT, 80 Beaufort Crescent, Holt

Cost: Free.

Please register your interest by phoning Donna (Carers ACT) on 6296 9900.

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Self esteem and assertiveness for women who are caring for someone with a disability

This course is for women who are caring for someone with a disability, who would like to increase their self esteem and express themselves with confidence. The course is delivered in partnership between Disability ACT, Women's Information & Referral Centre, and Carers ACT.

Dates: Mondays 11, 18 and 25 February

Mondays 4, 18, and 25 March

Time: 9.30am – 12.00pm

Location: Carers ACT, 80 Beaufort Crescent, Holt

Cost: Free.

Bookings are essential. For more information or to register your interest, please contact Disability Information Service on 6207 1086, or email disabilityact@act.gov.au. Click [here to download the flyer and registration form](#).

Carers Gathering for 2013 - Murramarang Beach Front Resort - 9 April to 11 April

If you have never been to a Carers Gathering, please consider applying – it is a wonderful experience! The Gathering will be held from Tuesday 9 to Thursday 11 April at the Murramarang Beachfront Nature Resort, South Durras. [Click here to view the flyer](#) and [click here for an application form](#).

If you have any questions please call Eleanor or Lucinda on 6296 9900 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au.

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National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Update

The NDIS Bill was introduced into the Australian Parliament in November 2012 and has been referred to the Senate community Affairs Committee. The Committee is expected to run its own public consultation process which will also ensure that the community is consulted on the development of this important reform. The NDIS arrangements in the ACT will involve a 'readiness period from July 2013 to July 2014 to prepare for the full roll out of the NDIS from July 2014. There are likely to be changes to some programs and research and testing of community requirements to enable the NDIS to roll out effectively in the ACT in July 2014. Few details are available as yet but it will most likely involve a series of communications and engagement activities including workshops. A Discussion Paper on the NDIS Rules has also been released for public comment. Submissions for comment and feedback on the Consultation Paper on the NDIS Rules will close on 1 March 2013. You can have Your Say on the new forum about the NDIS Rules or provide feedback via email to NDISengagement@fahcsia.gov.au. You can access [the consultation paper](#) here. More information about the NDIS and NDIS documents are available at www.ndis.gov.au.

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Mental Health Carers Respite — 1800 052 222

The Mental Health 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. The Mental Health Respite program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs. For more information about supports available under this Program visit the Carers ACT [website](#).

Counselling at Carers ACT — Supporting Family Carers — 1800 242 636

Did you know that Carers ACT can provide short-term counselling for family carers? Our counselling 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.

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ACT News

ACTCOSS workshops

Aboriginal Culture, History & Heritage Training

This one-day workshop for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal workers provides participants with a general introduction into the recent history of Aboriginal peoples in Australia. It aims to improve knowledge of Aboriginal culture and dispossession, and explores ways organisations may improve their practice to respond to the needs of Aboriginal peoples. Facilitated by Kerry Reed-Gilbert of Kuracca Consultancy.

Date: Friday 15 March

Time: 9.30am – 4.30pm

Location: Level 1 Meeting Room, Weston Community Hub, 1/6 Gritten Street, Weston

1 Day Appreciation of Torres Strait Culture Awareness Training

This one-day training for both Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers aims to assist participants in developing a better understanding of the cultural perspectives of Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. The training will explore ways for organisations to develop a better understanding of some key issues such as culture, kinship and community. This training assists participants in developing and improving a range of cross-cultural communication skills. Facilitated by Benny Hodges of Wis-Wei Consulting.

Date: Friday 1 March 2013

Time: 9.30am – 4.30pm

Location: Level 1 Meeting Room, Weston Community Hub, 1/6 Gritten Street, Weston

Cost: ACTCOSS members \$165, Non-members \$235, Government/Corporate \$305. Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea provided. For further details please contact Lisa on 6202 7200 or by email lisa@actcoss.org.au. Bookings are essential. Please register early as places are limited.

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Invitation to attend ACT Community Mental Health Sector Development Workshops

Up to five mental health carers are invited to participate in three ACT Community Mental Health Development Workshops organised by the Mental Health Community Coalition of the ACT. Other key stakeholders have also been invited to participate in planning for the future of the mental health community sector. The workshops will be held in Civic on 18 and 19 February and on 5 March. There is no charge for attending these workshops. Click [here](#) for more information about these important workshops. If you wish to participate in the workshops, please contact Simon Viereck at the Coalition, on 6249 7756 or email simon.viereck@mhccact.org.au.

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Headspace ACT – Upcoming Programs

Headspace ACT has some great upcoming programs about to start:

- Chilled Anxiety group for young people aged 13-15 experiencing mild anxiety – commencing Wednesday 13 February. Click [here](#) for more information
- Art therapy program for people aged 15-18 years old experiencing anxiety, to increase skills in resilience – commencing Thursday 21 February. Click [here](#) for more information
- Ed-space. A new initiative. This is a monthly education/information session for family members, friends, carers, and young people, on various topics. The first topic is ‘mental health and wellbeing – what is normal?’ This program will be held the fourth Tuesday evening of the month – commencing Tuesday 25 February. Click [here](#) for more information.

Click here to read about [The ACT Youth Mental Health Summit 2012 and its findings](#).

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CIT Skills for Carers 2013

CIT Skills for Carers have released their February 2013 newsletter and planner, with courses and events in February to June. [Click here to access the newsletter and planner](#).

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Alzheimer’s Australia ACT - Worried About your Memory? What is Dementia?

This session explores what to do if you are worried about your memory, and the definition of dementia. Speaker –Karen Cmiel, Education Manager, Alzheimer’s Australia ACT.

Date: Tuesday 12 February

Time: 1.30pm – 3.30pm Tea/coffee provided

Location: Alzheimer’s Australia ACT, 159 Maribyrnong Avenue, Kaleen

Cost: Free – Donations are welcome. Bookings essential, email act.admin@alzheimers.org.au or phone 6255 0722. For more information, visit the website www.fightdementia.org.au.

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Get into Reading program

Belconnen Community Service, through the Day-to-Day Living Program, is holding a Get into Reading program. Everyone is welcome, including those that feel isolated, people living with depression or anxiety, and people living with dementia.

Date: Fridays starting the 8 February

Time: 1.30pm – 3.00pm

Location: Woden Library, Corinna Street, Phillip

Further enquires can be directed to John on 6264 0202 or simply register with BCS reception on 6264 0232.

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Connections FREE 1.5hr workshop - “Cool ways to communicate pt1”

This two part workshop themed “Cool ways to communicate pt1” will be a fun opportunity for participants to look at strategies to communicate with confidence, correctly, clearly and comfortably. (The second part of the workshop will continue the following month). This workshop will be facilitated by a friendly Connections volunteer and is for all people 18+ yrs who may have a mental illness.

Please call the Connections team on 6251 4060 for further information or to register.

Date: Tuesday 12 February

Time: 10.30am – 12.00pm

Location: Volunteering ACT training room, City walk, Civic.

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Stepping Stones to Success- a 2 weekend workshop for family members of AOD dependants

This two weekend course brings together family members to share common challenges and strategies. Harnessing and sharing collective experiences, wisdom and skills can be life changing for families. This will create a more positive environment for the user towards better outcomes. The course is a reality based approach that includes self care and valuing self. Becoming more resilient will assist family members to cope better with their journey and ultimately survive the journey intact.

Please note that this course is not for those who are actually using drugs and/or alcohol. [Click here to access a copy of the invitation flyer.](#)

Dates: 16 – 17 and 23 – 24 March

Time: 9.30am – 4.00pm

Venue: Canberra Hospital Garran, Level 1, Training Room 2, Building 5

Cost: \$60 (FDS members \$40). Fee assistance is available.

Registration and for more information: call 0402 604 354 or email theo@fds.ngo.org.au

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Alcohol and Drug Services, ACT Government Health Directorate Education & Therapy Groups

The Alcohol and Drug Services regularly run support and education groups for people who are having difficulty with ATOD, people seeking support in preventing relapse, and for friends and family members.

Topics include:

- Controlling Your Cannabis Use Group
- Supporting Families and Friends Group
- Controlling Your Drinking Group
- Therapeutic Recovery Group
- Mindfulness, Meditation and Stress Management Course
- Advanced Meditation

The cost is free. For more information choose the [Education and Therapeutic Group Flyer here](#) or call 6207 9977.

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Mental Illness Education ACT is NOW RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS for their school and community education programs

Have you, a relative or a friend, experienced a mental illness? Can you relate well to young people and work in a team? Would you feel comfortable talking about your experiences?

Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT) is recruiting volunteers to give presentations about mental illness to high school and college students as well as to the general community. All volunteers are fully

trained, work in pairs and are reimbursed for expenses. [Click here to access a flyer](#). Information evenings are:

Date: Thursday 28 February
Tuesday 5 March

Time: 6.00pm – 9.00pm (light supper provided)

Call Ben for more information and to book into an information evening – phone 6257 1195 or email ben@mieact.org.au.

Mental Health Justice Health, Alcohol & Drug Service – Smoke-Free Newsletter

The Division's 26 January Newsletter on the Smoke-Free Environment may be [accessed here](#).

National & International News and Research

In the media

- [RACGP calls for Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program to address equity of access going](#)
- [\\$5 million for mental health research](#)
- [Research to target depression and anxiety](#)
- [Explainer: What is Depression?](#)
- [Australian Rotary Health funds world firsts in mental health research](#)
- [Historical Moment – John F Kennedy Special Message to the Congress on Mental Illness and Mental Retardation February 5, 1963](#)
- [Investing in care: Recognising and valuing those who care 2013](#)
- [Managing Mental Illness in the workplace](#)

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WA Carers Guide

A guide for carers on information sharing with mental health clinicians has been developed in partnership between the School of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience, University of Western Australia; the Mental Health Division; the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist and Carers WA . The Guide relates to the WA Mental Health Act, but its content is relevant to all carers, consumers and mental health service providers. You can access the Guide [here](#).

Mental Health First Aid Australia Guidelines

Guidelines for the public have been developed by Mental Health First Aid Australia and the Mental Health Literacy Research Team, in the following areas:

- Providing Mental Health First Aid in English speaking countries
- Providing Mental Health First Aid to an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Person
- Providing Mental Health First Aid in some Asian Countries
- Guidelines for organisations: Helping employees successfully return to work following a mental health problem
- Guidelines for Carers of someone with a Mental Illness

You can access these guidelines at the [Mental Health First Aid Australia website](#).

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StigmaWatch with SANE Australia

People with mental illness put up with a lot more than their illness. Stigma contributes another major stress they can well do without. When SANE StigmaWatch receives a positive or negative report, each submission is researched and analysed using the Mindframe National Media Initiative's [Reporting Suicide and Mental Illness](#) guidelines, as well as codes of conduct governing the media industry. If a report is found to be inappropriate, StigmaWatch informs the media or business of the reasons for the complaint, and encourages the amendment or removal of the item. If this request is rejected or ignored, StigmaWatch will consider taking further action via industry bodies such as the Australian Communications and Media Authority, Australian Press Council, Advertising Standards Bureau or the Australian Human Rights Commission. Read more at the [SANE website](#).

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Free 'Family Focus' DVD – COPMI

Children of Parents with Mental Illness (COPMI) have released a free DVD to help families with mental illness issues. Many parents who experience depression or anxiety worry about whether they should talk with their children about their illness and how much they should say. The *Family Focus* DVD helps you start the conversation with your child. Open family discussion has been proven to bolster family strength and build a child's resilience to developing mental health problems of their own. Click here for [further information and to order a DVD](#).

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Education and Social Progress

The OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) does extensive research work which covers learning at all ages, from birth to old age. This project is about better understanding how to prepare individuals for tomorrow's world; a world that can be prosperous yet challenging, unpredictable and uncertain. Individuals are more capable of preventing physical and mental illness by following healthy lifestyles and interpersonal relationships. Such individuals can contribute to a cohesive society. [Read more here](#).

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The role of informal community resources in supporting stable housing for young people recovering from mental illness: key issues for housing policy-makers and practitioners

This research project analysed housing policy interventions that help young people in recovery from mental illness. In particular it examined the way independent housing assists them access informal resources (e.g. family, peer and social networks such as sporting, church, cultural and community groups) at a local community level, and how this might promote other outcomes such as social inclusion, employment, and better health. Read [more about the research here](#).

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Expert insights – Call for questions

LIFE's upcoming international edition of Expert Insights features Professor Paul Yip, Director of the Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention at The University of Hong Kong and vice president of the

International Association of Suicide Prevention (IASP). His recent monograph "Suicide in Asia: causes and prevention" has provided an important contribution in understanding suicide and its prevention in Asia. Professor Yip is available to answer your questions on cultural factors in suicide.

You may wish to know more about suicide trends and current issues affecting suicide in Asia, how cultural factors may affect suicidality or how best to consider culture when working to prevent suicide. Please submit your questions on this topic for consideration to LIFE Communications at life@ontheline.org.au by Tuesday 12 February. You can [access the latest newsletter from LIFE here](#).

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Veteran Mental Health Strategy 2013 Consultation Draft

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) is seeking your feedback on a draft Veteran Mental Health Strategy 2013. This strategy provides a framework for DVA's mental health services and programs into the future. The new strategy will build on the 2001 mental health policy: [Towards Better Mental Health for the Veteran Community](#). The Department seeks feedback from interested parties on the consultation draft by 15 February 2013. All submissions must also include the submission coversheet. A copy of the [draft Veteran Mental Health Strategy 2013 and submission sheets can be accessed here](#).

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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.

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