

## E-Bulletin – 9 July 2012

### Carers Voice

#### Smoke-free mental health facilities

You may be aware that ACT Health will be enforcing a total smoking ban at all mental health treatment centres by early 2013. The ACT Government is committed to introducing the ban. Research has been undertaken on the benefits and barriers of implementing smoking bans at psychiatric facilities. [Here](#) is a *Canberra Times* article on the issue. The Victorian Department of Health has released guidelines providing advice about smoke-free environments in public mental health services, you can read these guidelines [here](#). You can also access two other reports regarding this issue [here](#) and [here](#). Doris Kordes, Mental Health Policy & Representation Officer at Carers ACT would be happy to hear your views on this matter. Please call Doris on 6296 9936 or email her at [mhcarers@carersact.org.au](mailto:mhcarers@carersact.org.au).

#### Radio 2XX – Opening Minds, 3 July

Last week two mental health carer representatives provided powerful and moving narratives of their mental health carer experiences on Radio 2XX. Doris Kordes talked about the mental health carer representation program funded by ACT Government. There's a strong possibility that carers will have future opportunities to 'tell their stories' through community radio. Please contact Doris on 6296 9936 or email her at

[mhcarers@carersact.org.au](mailto:mhcarers@carersact.org.au) if you would be interested in participating.

#### Mental Health Carers Networking & Consulting Forum – 30 July

Please mark this date in your diary. The Forum provides you with an opportunity to connect with carer representatives – to hear their reports, and to voice carer issues. In addition, a representative from the Division of Mental Health, Justice Health, Alcohol & Drug Services will also present on one of the redesign projects currently underway.

Date: 30 July 2012

Time: 12.00pm - 2.00pm

Location: Orion Room, Southern Cross Club, Woden

RSVP: [Rosie.fisk@carersact.org.au](mailto:Rosie.fisk@carersact.org.au) or phone: 9296 9952.

A light lunch will be provided. More information about the Forum will be available in the next E-Bulletin.

### Carers ACT in July

**All events are free for current family carers but BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL. To RSVP, please call Eleanor on 6296 9908 or email [rsvp@carersact.org.au](mailto:rsvp@carersact.org.au)**

#### EVENTS:

##### On Course for Carers: Steps into Residential Aged Care

Athlene from ACAT (Aged Care Assessment Team) and Carers ACT staff

will discuss the pathway to residential care.

Date: Thursday 19 July 2012

Time: 10.00am – 12.00pm

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

**Strength & Balance Class for CALD Carers:  
Six Week Course  
(Carers from a culturally or linguistically  
diverse background)**

Arthritis ACT will introduce its Strength & Balance Program to local multicultural groups.

The six week program is designed to improve balance, muscle strength and flexibility in older people whose fear of falling is stopping them from being as active as they would like.

Date: Wednesday afternoons from 25 July to 29 August 2012

Time: 2.00pm - 3.00pm

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

**Tickets to “Circus Quirkus” for Carers and  
their families**

A great show for all the family. Carers and their families are invited to attend this clowning, juggling and acrobatics show.

Tickets are available to shows at three different times.

Date: Thursday 26 July 2012

Time: Three shows: 10.00am, 1.00pm, 6.00pm

Location: Queanbeyan Conference Centre, 253 Crawford Street, Queanbeyan

**Day Trip to the Craft and Quilt Fair**

Come and enjoy a day at the Craft and Quilt Fair. Tickets will be distributed prior

to the event and carers are to make their own transport arrangements.

Date: Friday 10 August 2012

Time: from 10:00am

Location: EPIC (Exhibition Park in Canberra), Flemington Road, Mitchell

**All events are free for current family carers but BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL. To RSVP, please call Eleanor on 6296 9908 or email [rsvp@carersact.org.au](mailto:rsvp@carersact.org.au)**

**Carers ACT 2012 – ACT Election  
Campaign**

Carers ACT is launching its election campaign at a morning tea 10.00am – 12.00pm on Thursday 2 August at Regatta Point. All political parties and candidates standing in the ACT election, as well as carers, other peak bodies and media will be invited to the launch. If you would like to attend the morning tea to help launch the Carers ACT 2012 Election Campaign please phone our reception on 6296 9900 or email Alison Elliott [alison.elliott@carersact.org.au](mailto:alison.elliott@carersact.org.au) by Tuesday 26 July.

There is no cost to attend the launch.

**ACT NEWS**

**Sewing Group**

The Mental Health Foundation's Rainbow Program will be running a twice-weekly sewing group for women with a mental illness, commencing in August. The program will run over a couple of months and participants will learn the skills necessary to make items for themselves,

including clothes, bags and aprons. Places are limited so contact the foundation to register your interest!

Cost: Free

Dates: To be advised in August

Time: To be advised (classes to be run in three hour sessions)

Location: Block G, Canberra Technology Park, Phillip Avenue, Watson

Contact: Erica Freeman (Rainbow Manager) on 6242 6575 or

[erica.freeman@mhf.org.au](mailto:erica.freeman@mhf.org.au)

Donations of sewing materials, haberdashery supplies and sewing machines are also needed - please contact the foundation if you can help out!

### DRAMATIC RECOVERY

DRAMATIC RECOVERY is a Forum Theatre project in which people who have experienced mental illness create short plays that illustrate the challenges of living with mental illness. Members of the audience can then intervene in these plays to find better ways for our community to deal with mental health and mental illness.

Who can be involved? Anyone who has experienced any form of mental illness, whether in the past or today. No previous acting experience is needed. There are no auditions, but there will be a short interview before being accepted into the project.

How much time will it take? Rehearsals will run for six hours a week between late July and early October, probably in two

blocks of 3 hours each. Rehearsal times and places will be set to suit participants.

When will the performances be?  
Performances will be between 1 October and 17 October, to coincide with Mental Health Week.

Where will performances be held? In different venues around Canberra.

Does it cost? No. Involvement is free, and participants will be paid a small fee to cover travel and other expenses.

What's the deadline for being involved in the project? 20 July, 2012 but the sooner the better.

Interested? Please contact Robin Davidson on [robin.theatre@gmail.com](mailto:robin.theatre@gmail.com) or phone 0450 960 903, or leave a message at 6230 7629.

### Police cleared over Doherty shooting

Act Chief Coroner, Lorraine Walker has found that mental health workers should spend more time engaging with ACT Police operations after a fatal shooting of a Wanniasa man last year. Read the full *Canberra Times* article [here](#).

There is *ABC News* coverage of the topic [here](#).

### ACT seeks to pilot disability scheme

The ACT Government is lobbying for Canberra to become one of the launch sites of the National Disability Insurance

Scheme. The Territory will make a pitch to the Commonwealth to be among the first jurisdictions to join the scheme from July next year, when it is piloted in two sites with another two to join a year later. Read more [here](#).

### **Doodle Day**

Doodle Day is a celebration of creativity and caring in the ACT, in the form of a drawing competition. Created by 2B Advertising & Design the competition raises awareness and money for carers in our community. Anyone and everyone is encouraged to enter a doodle at [www.2bdoodleday.com](http://www.2bdoodleday.com) with a selection of outstanding doodles framed and displayed in a gallery space in the city centre and online. All selected doodles will be available for purchase in an online auction with all money going to Carers ACT. The auction will finish at 6.30pm Friday 31 August.

## **NATIONAL NEWS**

### **Lifeline: Stress Down Day**

Now in its 5th year, Lifeline's annual Stress Down Day is happening on Friday 27 July. Get together with colleagues, friends and family to have a stress-free day and raise funds for Lifeline. Whether you choose to wear your Stress Down slippers all day, go to work in your pyjamas, or have a stress free morning tea – the choices are endless!

Every day, Lifeline receives 1,250 calls from Australians in need of support. Sadly up to 50 of these calls are from people at high risk of suicide. The Lifeline Crisis Support Chat is also available for people who prefer to seek help via a real time, one-on-one online conversation with a trained crisis supporter.

By taking part in Stress Down Day and raising funds for Lifeline, participants will help Lifeline to answer more calls, provide more one-on-one chats and help us continue to save lives. You can access the Stress Down website [here](#).

### **Lifeline: Out of the Shadows**

To coincide with World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September, Lifeline will be holding national Out of the Shadows – suicide prevention and awareness walks.

These annual walks aim to raise awareness for suicide prevention, remember those lost to suicide and unite in a commitment to prevent further deaths by suicide.

Suicide is the leading cause of death for Australians under the age of 44. Lifeline believes most suicides are preventable and we all have a role to play. You can make a difference by participating in one of Lifeline's Out of the Shadows walks.

Get involved by joining a walk or organising a walk in your local community. For more information about an Out of the Shadows walk in your area or how to register a walk visit [www.outoftheshadows.org.au](http://www.outoftheshadows.org.au)

### **People with a mental disability held in NT jails without conviction**

This ABC News video discusses a NT law that allows for people with a mental disability to be held in indefinite detention, and without conviction. Watch the video [here](#) (there is also a transcript available underneath the video). Coverage from *The Australian* on this issue is available [here](#).

### **Rural Health Channel aims to close city-country gap**

Channel 600 (or the Rural Health Channel) was launched on 26 June to address continued disparity between the health standards of rural and urban Australians. Mental health organisations like Lifeline are able to use the station to promote their own initiatives. Read the full article in *The Australian* [here](#).

### **Mental health nurses launch home care agency**

Two mental health nurses in Victoria have launched one of the first health home care agencies in Australia to care for people with a mental illness. Read more [here](#).

### **Indigenous mental health graduates now have a national voice**

Indigenous graduates with a specialty of mental health studies within a Bachelor of Health Sciences degree are now

represented by the Indigenous Allied Health Australian Inc (IAHA). IAHA has extended full membership to mental health graduates as a means to support the Indigenous mental health workforce. IAHA also helps to work with universities and other institutions to increase the number of Indigenous graduates. Read more [here](#).

### **University of Queensland Research: Opportunity for carer input**

Claire Greaves, a PhD candidate at the University of Queensland, is interviewing carers of elderly people across Australia to investigate the impact of caring on carers' health and wellbeing. You can read a news item about her research [here](#). If you would like to find out more or wish to register your interest in participating in the study, please follow the link: <https://experiment.psy.uq.edu.au/eldercare/> or you can check out [the study's facebook page](#) and connect directly with the team and other carers. All participants will be ensured confidentiality at all stages of the study in line with the University of Queensland's research policies.

### **Mental illness stigma costs jobs**

The Commonwealth parliamentary committee on education and employment found that a pervasive stigma surrounding people with a mental illness is costing them job opportunities. The lead

recommendation of the committee is that the Commonwealth Government should run a national education campaign addressing discrimination against people with a mental illness in schools, workplaces and communities. Read news coverage [here](#).

### **New Website – mindhealthconnect**

The mindhealthconnect website is a new initiative launched in July 2012 as part of the Australian Government's National E-Mental Health Strategy. It provides a gateway to issues surrounding mental health care and can provide first steps to finding relevant support and resources to meet your needs. It can be accessed [here](#).

## **RESEARCH AND NEWS**

### **Perinatal depression survey**

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) has released the results of a survey into the rates of perinatal depression (depression that is diagnosed from pregnancy until the child's first birthday). The results show that nearly 20% of mothers surveyed were diagnosed with depression. You can read the report [here](#). This is Minister Butler's [press release](#). [Here](#) is a *Canberra Times* article on the issue.

### **Australia's Health 2012: Report**

AIHW has also released its biennale report card on health in Australia. The report makes for an interesting read; researchers at the institute have found for instance that 45% of Australians aged 16-85 have experienced a mental disorder at some time in their lives. You can access the report [here](#).

### **AIHW: Homelessness Report**

This AIHW report found that on average 18,574 people were accommodated by specialist homelessness services on any given night from October to December 2011. The report found that 18% of clients were aged under 10 and just under half of all clients (48%) were aged under 25. Among those who received assistance, 59% were female and 41% were male. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represented 21% of clients. You can read the full report [here](#).

### **AIHW: The mental health of prison entrants in Australia**

Released 5 July, this AIHW report investigated the mental health of prison entrants, based on data from the 2010 National Prisoner Health Census. It found that in 2010 nearly one third of prison entrants reported mental health issues (a rate 2.5 times higher than the general population). You can read news coverage of the report [here](#) in *The Sydney Morning Herald*. Here is the [link](#) to the full report.

### **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and assisting people experiencing disadvantage**

This report by the National Pro Bono (Legal) Resource Centre recommends that lawyers need to be better prepared in assisting disadvantaged clients navigate ADR processes. The report finds that the greatest need for disadvantaged people is for legal advice and representation, rather than lawyers acting pro bono as ADR practitioners. You can access a news item on the report [here](#). This is the [link](#) to the full report.

### **Adults concerned for mental health and wellbeing of Australian youth**

The Australian Attitudes to Young People Survey, conducted by Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) and Bupa Health Foundation, found that more than half of Australian adults believe the mental health of young people today is worse than in their generation, and nearly half have concerns about the younger generation's emotional wellbeing. You can access a summary of key findings [here](#). Here is the [full report](#).

### **Caring for country is also good for Indigenous people**

This article, from Primary Health Care Research and Information Service, examined linkages between Indigenous

people's connection to land and myriad improved health and wellbeing outcomes. Read more [here](#).

### **Urgent need for mental health services for Indigenous people in custody**

Research published in the "Medical Journal of Australia" found that there is an urgent need for culturally relevant mental health services to be developed to support Indigenous Australians in custody. The study found that most Indigenous inmates in Queensland had a mental illness, with 73% of Indigenous men and 86% of Indigenous women experiencing a mental illness. Read more [here](#). Here is an [article](#) from *The Australian* on the same issue.

### **What pushes Aussies to support good causes?**

If you are interested in knowing more about what types of causes Australians are likely to support, this article summarises the Australian results from a global survey into 'good causes' and human behaviour. Interestingly, the cause that Australians were most likely to get behind was 'improving the quality of healthcare'. The survey also found that Australians were most likely to support causes that had an impact on their everyday life. Read more [here](#). There is a link to full report [here](#).

### **Cold and gloomy weather is bad for our bones**

Medical experts are concerned at the lack of vitamin D that some people are getting during the winter months in Australia. Apart from being essential for bone strength, research has also linked low vitamin D levels with diseases such as cancer, diabetes, multiple sclerosis and mental health issues. The issue is so serious that some experts have recommended that foods should be fortified with vitamin D. Read more [here](#).

### **Friends, Family and Mental Health Recovery**

This article is a personal reflection of a person experiencing bipolar disorder, and the importance of friends and family in the recovery process. You can read the article [here](#).

### **Easy ways to be mindful every day**

If you are interested in mindfulness technique, this article outlines seven ways that you can incorporate mindfulness into your daily routine. Read more [here](#).

### **Placebos becoming increasingly 'effective' in schizophrenia drug trials**

According to researchers at the US Food and Drug Administration, it is becoming increasingly difficult to prove the efficiency of drugs to treat schizophrenia as more

and more patients are responding positively to placebos given in clinical trials. Read more [here](#).

### **Should your doctor be asking after your pet, too?**

Amanda Carne of the Primary Health Care Research and Information Service has written about the importance of companion animals and the positive impact of pets on a person's physical and mental health. The article appears in the *Crikey* health blog [here](#).

### **Examining Internet usage for signs of depressive symptoms**

Researchers at the Missouri University of Science and Technology in the US have examined the Internet usage habits of undergraduate students in an attempt to understand whether certain patterns of use are connected with depressive symptoms. You can read more [here](#).

### **Benefits of yoga meditation for carers**

Researchers at University of California, Los Angeles in the US have found yoga meditation has mental health benefits for family carers. You can read more [here](#). Similarly, researchers from the University of Sydney have also recently discovered that meditation relaxation techniques are linked to improved mental health outcomes and greater wellbeing. Read more [here](#).

### **Blogging helps new mothers relieve stress**

A study at Brigham Young University in the US has found that new mothers who read and write blogs may feel less alone. The study found that while blogging had a positive impact on new mothers, social network sites like facebook and MySpace did not seem to impact on subjects' wellbeing. Read more [here](#).

### **Heart attack survivors may develop post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**

Results of a research program undertaken at Columbia University Medical Centre in the US have focused on the emotional impact of a life-threatening heart event. Research found that PTSD after a heart attack was far more common than previously believed, and that the disorder doubles the risk of dying from a second event over the next one to three years (as compared to those who do not have PTSD). Read more [here](#).

### **Singapore: Looking for ways to improve citizens' mental health**

The Singaporean Government is investigating international experience and models to inform the development of a new Singaporean mental health strategy. Interestingly, while the rates of mental health illness in Singapore are comparatively similar with other nations,

the rate of obsessive-compulsive disorder is 3% of the population; in the US the figure is 2.3% and 1.1% in Europe. Read coverage in *The Jakarta Post* [here](#).

### **Overwork and the impact on mental health**

Professor Sue Richardson, a Principal Research Fellow at the Flinders National Institute of Labour Studies said of the 8,000 employees surveyed in the annual Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA), that a quarter were working more hours than they wanted, and resultantly displayed 'significantly' lower levels of mental health. Read more [here](#).

### **Disadvantaged left behind in digital age**

As more and more health services go online, experts have warned that marginalised groups including the unemployed, elderly, people with a disability and people with an educational disadvantaged risk being left behind. Read more [here](#).

### **Predicting post-traumatic stress disorder before it happens**

Researchers at Tel Aviv University are trialing new technologies to investigate the areas of the brain regulating emotional responses to trauma, as a means to discover if a person is more susceptible to developing post-traumatic stress if they are exposed to a traumatic incident. The researchers are also working

on applying the technology to the diagnosis of other psychological disorders such as schizophrenia, depression and attention deficit disorder. Read more [here](#).

### **Thinking of a loved one eases painful memories**

A Cornell (US) study has found that after recalling an upsetting event, thinking about a loved one can help you feel better and reduce negative thinking. Researchers also found that these benefits continued to result in fewer psychological and physical health problems at least a month afterwards. 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.***