

# Carers ACT

## Carers Representation Program E-Bulletin:

### *Carers in Mind*

30<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Welcome to the Carer Representation Program E-Bulletin sent out every fortnight to inform you about committees, news and events of interest to the Carer Representation Program.

This issue we have information on **Mental Health Week**, committees attended by **Carer Representatives**, the **Keeping Families Connected** workshops and the **ACT Women's Return to Work Grants Program**.

### Mental Health Week

#### Informed and Connected

This years ACT Mental Health Week Theme is 'Informed and Connected' and represents the need for individuals to be informed and educated about mental illness, and the benefits of being connected within the community. Mental Health Week is running from the 4<sup>th</sup> until the 10<sup>th</sup> of October and there are many exciting events for all ages to get involved.

The Official Launch will be held at 11am on Tuesday the 6<sup>th</sup> at Floriade and will culminate in the creation of a human smile for Children of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPMI). Also for the kids there is a Book Launch by the Mental Health Foundation at Woden Library on Wednesday the 7<sup>th</sup> from 10am.

There will be art exhibitions, morning teas and gatherings galore and of course the Mindscapes Music and Arts Festival, hosted by Mental Health Recovery ACT, from 4pm until 10pm Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> in Garema Place. Join in the dancing, listen to poetry, be entertained and gather useful information at the same time.

For further information download the Mental Health Week Calendar through the link below. Mental Health Week 2009 Calendar (PDF File - 172k)

### Committee Updates

*Each issue an update of a Carer Representatives Committee will be included in this section.*

*This issue will cover the **Mental Health ACT Policy Committee***

#### Carer Representation

The *Mental Health Policy Committee* is responsible for reviewing and developing Mental Health ACT policies and recommending policies for endorsement by the Mental Health Strategic Executive. The Committee, which has 16 members - including a consumer representative and a carer representative, is required to ensure that Mental Health ACT has a current suite of effective policies for the effective management of mental health services.

The Committee's main functions are to:

1. Maintain a systematic approach to policy development and review.
2. Ensure that Mental Health ACT policy is consistent with National policy and ACT Government policy.
3. Consider the results of quality audits in relation to policies.
4. Review policies every 4 years from the last approval date, or sooner if required.
5. Maintain a policy review schedule.

Over the past four years the committee has reviewed, refined or developed over 50 mental health policies aimed at improving the quality of mental health services provided to consumers in the ACT. The Committee consults with key stakeholders, including Carers ACT and the Carers network in reviewing and developing policies to ensure that the policies reflect best practice, are practical and produce positive outcomes for consumers and their carers. Some of the policies that have been recently reviewed by the Committee include:

- Restraint of Consumers
- Inter –hospital Transfers
- Confidentiality and Privacy
- Police Assistance in an Emergency
- Consent to Treatment: Guidelines for Mental Health ACT.

## Carer Supports

### Keeping Families Connected

Keeping Families Connected is a five week program for people caring for someone with a Mental Illness or drug and alcohol issues. The course provides information and explores issues connected with: Carer stress; mental illness; listening skills; assertively working with mental health professionals; suicide prevention; and community support services.

The course will be running each Wednesday evening from the 21<sup>st</sup> of October for 5 weeks, 6pm – 8.30pm. Light refreshments will be served.

Due to limited spaces it is important that you sign up for this course. If you would like to attend this course please contact Lindy on 6296 9900 or [lindyw@carersact.asn.au](mailto:lindyw@carersact.asn.au).

### Women's Return to Work Grants

Women on low incomes who have been out of the workforce for an extended time due to child care responsibilities are continuing to be invited to apply for grants of up to \$1000 to help them to return to work. Grants can be used for training and education, child care and other resources that assist a return to employment.

The ACT Women's Return to Work Grants Program is an ACT Government initiative that assists women to achieve increased financial independence by helping them prepare for, obtain and maintain employment.

The program is funded through the ACT Office for Women in the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services. It is administered by the Women's Information and Referral Centre.

Application forms and eligibility requirements are available online at [www.women.act.gov.au](http://www.women.act.gov.au) or by phoning the Women's Information and Referral Centre on 6205 2885.