



Federal Budget 2006 - 07

What does it mean for Carers?

Carers Bonus

Carers receiving Carer Payment or Carer Allowance will again benefit from a one off bonus payment following the release of the 2006 - 07 Budget.

The Government has also extended the Carer Bonus to carers receiving the Wife Pension and Department of Veteran's Affairs Partner Pension.

A big congratulations to the TPI Wives Association who have fought hard to see this come about.

However, there are still more Carers receiving other entitlements, such as the Aged Care Pension, to whom the Government has not extended the bonus.

Backdating of the Carer Allowance

From 1 July 2006, backdating provisions for Carer Allowance have been standardised to a maximum period of 12 weeks prior to the date of lodgement of the claim. Carer Allowance is a payment paid to people in recognition of the care they provide to an adult or child with a disability or medical condition and is not income or asset tested. Carer Allowance can be paid as a stand alone payment or in addition to other Centrelink payments including Family Tax Benefit, Age Pension, Parenting Payment and Carer Payment. Current assessment methods of care requirements are based on functional ability or care needs and eligibility can now be established relatively quickly.

Extension of Carer Payment to eligibility for children

From 1 July 2006, Carer Payment eligibility will be extended to carers of children with severe intellectual, psychiatric or behavioural disabilities that result in challenging behaviour.

These children often require constant supervision for their safety

and the safety of others. They are often unable to attend school, which prevents their parents and/or carers from being able to undertake substantial paid employment.

These changes will also benefit people who currently receive Parenting Payment and, under the Welfare to Work requirements, would otherwise be expected to undertake part-time work when their youngest child reaches the age of eight.

Home and Community Care

The Government has announced extra funds in the 2006 - 07 Budget to simplify the eligibility and entry into Home and Community Care (HACC) services however these measures will increase demand for already overstretched services such as personal care, food services, respite and transport.

The funding increase for HACC services in the 2006-07 Budget is 6 percent.

Community and Aged Care Training

Increased training of community care workers, nurses and aged care staff is good news for family Carers.

Disability

The announcement of the establishment of a nationally coordinated peer support program, for parents of young children with disabilities, will provide Carers with group learning and social support opportunities.

Better Mental Health Services

Better Mental Health Services, including early intervention services, new funding for mental health nurses and better access to psychiatrists and psychologists through the Medicare Benefits Scheme are positive measures in supporting family Carers.

New Membership Structure

On Thursday 13 April, you, our members approved a new membership model which will see even more Carers have the ability to stay in touch with Carer issues and services. This means that as of the 1st July 2006 membership will be free for individuals, so there is no barrier to for Carers who wish to become members of Carers ACT. We will instead be asking you to make a voluntary donation if you are able. We invite you to continue your membership of Carers ACT as your support is vital in helping fund Carers support and Carers representation.

Many Carers who receive services from Carers ACT are not members of the association and therefore miss being notified of information though the newsletter which could assist them in their caring role. As from 1st July all Carers who receive services will be asked if they want to become members and if they want to receive the newsletter.

We would like to thank all our members who have supported these changes as it will mean that more and more Carers will be informed about the supports they need and are entitled to.

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Carers ACT From the CEO



Who is Carers ACT?

Carers ACT provides information, counselling, respite, education and support for people who have taken on caring responsibilities. The role of Carers ACT is to participate in a partnership with Government, the non-Government sector, and the wider ACT community for the provision of better services, to improve the conditions under which Carers work and to increase recognition of Carers' contribution to the ACT community.

Our Vision:

That Carers are recognised, valued and supported by Governments and the community.

Our Mission:

To enable and empower Carers in all their diversity to fulfil their role through provision of information, support, community education and advocacy to lead change and be the 'voice' of Carers in the ACT.

Contact Us:

Belconnen Office:

Ground Floor, Churches Centre,
Benjamin Way, Belconnen ACT 2617
Phone: 6296 9900 Fax: 6296 9999
E-mail: carlyh@carersact.asn.au
<http://www.carersact.asn.au>

Torrens Office:

1 Torrens Place, Torrens ACT 2607
<http://www.carersact.asn.au>

Commonwealth Carelink Centre
1800 052 222*

Commonwealth Carer Resource
Centre 1800 242 636*
Commonwealth Carer Respite
Centre 1800 059 059*

* An Australian Government Initiative. Free local call. Mobile phones will be charged at mobile phone rates.

Patron Mr R J Cahill, OAM,
Chief Magistrate

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NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:

Friday 14 July 2006

Please send articles and items to
carlyh@carersact.asn.au

Dear Members and Friends

Good news for working Carers - the Federal Government will soon be making funding available to better support Carers juggle their work and caring commitments. Details of this program and the supports available to working Carers will be outlined in the next newsletter.

Carers ACT completed an evaluation and study of Carer information and dissemination in the ACT - funded by the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services. The report identified gaps in information supports to Carers and identified the barriers to Carers in accessing information. The report has outlined some sound ideas on development of appropriate and timely Carer information for consideration by the ACT Government, Carers ACT and other service providers.

The Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services have also provided special funding for Carers ACT to deliver education and training to a wide range of Canberra's service providers. The aim of the program is to promote Carer inclusive practice in service delivery where the primary focus is the care recipient.

If you have any concerns or issues you would like to raise with me or any member of staff at Carers ACT, we would welcome hearing from you and encourage you to give us feedback about our programs and services.

With best regards.

Dee McGrath

NEW RESOURCE

Palliative Care Kit & Folder

This kit gives Carers providing palliative care comprehensive information about available services and the practical aspects of caring for an individual with palliative care needs.

This resource is produced by the ACT Palliative Care Society Inc. Calvary Health Care ACT and the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

To order a copy of this resource please call the ACT Palliative Society ACT Inc. on 6273 9606.

Christmas in July

Join us for an early Christmas celebration that includes a 3 course traditional Christmas dinner, entertainment by Linda Hansen and Band, lots of dancing, laughing, singing and playing games and a present from Santa.

This event is hosted in partnership with the Mental Health Foundation and the Mental Illness Fellowship.

When: 6:30pm Friday 14 July

Where: Harmonie German Club, 49 Jerrabomberra Ave Narrabundah

Cost: \$40 / \$30 (Concession)

RSVP: Mary on 6230 7629 or mary.gays@mhf.com.au

by Wednesday 5 July



“No one knows more about what it means to be a Carer than you do, so use the newsletter as a way for you to share your story with other Carers who are in the same boat as you.”

I Wish Someone Had Told Me....

Jennifer Donald cares for her husband Peter. Peter was left severely disabled after a brain haemorrhage and needs a lot of care.

“When the police turned up in the middle of the night I knew something terrible had happened. They told me that my son, who was away at university, had fallen from a balcony and was seriously ill in a hospital some 150 miles away. Like most mothers, my first instinct was to get in the car and drive there immediately. However, I care for my husband, Peter who is severely disabled and cannot be left on his own. I desperately needed a suitably qualified professional to come and look after my husband.

I was really in a panic and overcome with worry about my son. Then I remembered that one of the workers who helps look after Peter had given me the Commonwealth Carer Respite phone number. I called them and they sent over a support worker straight away. They assured me they would sort out a more permanent arrangement in the morning. I was finally able to go and visit my son. If the Respite Coordinator wasn't so helpful and quick to respond, I honestly don't know what I would have done.

My son was OK but on returning home, I wanted to make sure I was not caught in this situation again. I got an Emergency Care Kit and made a plan in case something goes wrong in the future. This has given me much more peace of mind about what would happen should I be involved in an emergency situation in the future.

We can provide you with an Emergency Care Kit with an Emergency Care Plan and a card for your wallet so that people will know who you care for and where they will be so that we can help you in an emergency or crisis situation.

Call the Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre on 1800 242 636* to order your copy of the Emergency Care Kit today.



After Hours Emergency Respite

Carers ACT operates the Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre (CCRC) in the ACT which provides 24 hour access to emergency and short term respite services through the 1800 059 059* number. This number is currently answered by Carers ACT staff during business hours, and also on a rostered basis, after hours, on weekends and public holidays.

From 30 June 2006 the after hours service only will be provided by TeleResponse Australia. There will be no other change - the phone number remains the same.

When a Carer who needs emergency support calls the CCRC number after hours, the call will be taken by a qualified TeleResponse staff member who will work with you to decide on the appropriate

course of action. This may range from the provision of immediate respite care to referral to a more appropriate service. TeleResponse will maintain the high level of care and service currently provided by Carers ACT staff. Carers ACT will monitor the provision of this service and would appreciate any feedback that you may have.

Please note that the after hours service is only for emergency respite, or for urgent service cancellations. It is not a counselling service and cannot provide information on residential respite vacancies. For these services please phone the CCRC on 1800 059 059* during business hours.

If you have any queries or concerns regarding the CCRC phone service please contact Maria Smith, Respite Manager on (02) 6290 7405.



Counselling Corner

Grief and loss - part of the caring experience



Change is a normal part of life. Change is especially common in the lives of Carers and their families. With change, comes loss. With loss comes grief, it is the emotional reaction to loss. If we love, we grieve. As Allan Kellehear puts it "We love in a thousand different ways, and we grieve in a thousand different ways". Grief can be hard work, and at times overwhelming. We are affected emotionally, physically, behaviourally and spiritually by our loss. Emotions can range through passionate sadness, anger, anxiety, confusion, guilt, fear and, at times, relief. Relief can be a common feeling, for example, if the person who dies has suffered a long and debilitating illness. It is important to recognise that passionate or deeply felt sadness is normal when we experience a significant loss. Physically we can feel sick, experience emptiness in our stomachs, our limbs can ache and we can suffer extreme fatigue. People's behavioural reactions to loss can range from social withdrawal to intense activity and busyness. Some people question their spiritual beliefs, others are affirmed in their beliefs. Significant loss challenges our assumptions about the world, and makes us think deeply about our priorities and beliefs about life. Loss forces us to make new meaning of our lives. These are normal reactions to significant losses. There is no clear or correct timetable for grief; it takes as long as it takes.

Most people cope with their grief using the support of family and friends. It is a time when our support networks are very important - we may come from a large family that gathers around at times of distress, or we may have one good friend who sticks by us at times of great

need. Sometimes we can be surprised when the support comes from an unexpected direction, or when those we feel close to have difficulty reaching out to us. Many factors effect our experience of grief. Two of these factors are our former experience of loss and the nature of the loss. For example, was it traumatic? Was it untimely? Our cultural background; our gender; our personality; our state of physical and mental health; our coping strategies, and how our family of origin coped with loss; can all influence our experience of loss. We cope with a significant loss in the way we cope with other crises in our lives - in the best way we can.

Carers can be faced with ongoing change and loss. The grief can often be unrecognised and unacknowledged as in the case of living with a partner who develops Alzheimer's disease, or having a disabled child. As a family member's condition changes new losses can occur. Grief can be chronic. Loss can accumulate over time, and new losses can bring up old losses. We can get overwhelmed and depressed. We may feel confused and question the meaning of life. We may feel an ongoing rage at the world. These feelings may impact on our lives in a negative way. It is times like these when reaching out for extra help in the form of grief counselling or attending the peer support grief and loss Seasons for Growth groups at Carers ACT can be beneficial. The counselling service at Carers ACT offers grief counselling to Carers. To make an appointment to see a Carers ACT counsellor ring 1800 242 636 or 6296 9900. Ring Jill on 6296 9913 to attend the Seasons for Growth group starting in August at Woden.

Finally - it is important to remember that we all experience change, loss and grief. They are a normal and natural part of life. Most people manage their loss and grief effectively with the support of family and friends. However, there can be times when we may need to take the step to get extra help, especially if we are experiencing ongoing losses in our lives.

The Balloons

By Andrea Taylder

I went to The Balloons this morning,
And I missed you

I sat in the car alone
Remembering

Of the times we went
In the frost and the cold

How we stood and watched
Balloons filling with air

We marveled at their majesty
Hovering gently above us

Once or twice we followed
Watching them over the lake

Holding your hand
Trying to keep warm

I remember the twinkle in your eyes
As you looked into mine

The laughter we shared
How happy we were

I went to The Balloons this morning
And I missed you

I sat in the car alone
Remembering

April 22, 2006

If you have any particular questions or topics you would like covered in this new column "Counselling Corner", please send it to Carers ACT or e-mail us at carlyh@carersact.asn.au

Elder Abuse Prevention & Assistance

There is NO excuse campaign

You may have noticed or heard that the ACT Government has launched a new campaign targeting Elder Abuse in our community.

In response to recent allegations of wide spread elder abuse the ACT Government has also implemented an Elder Abuse Information and Referral phone number. We would like to encourage any Carers who have knowledge or fears of elder abuse to ring the hotline or us.

What is Elder Abuse?

It has been estimated that there are more than 1,500 cases of elder abuse in Canberra every year.

There's NO Excuse.

What is Abuse and Mistreatment of Older People?

Any behaviour that within a relationship of trust which causes harm to an older person.

What is regarded as abuse or mistreatment of older people?

Financial Abuse - The illegal or improper use of an older person's money or possessions.

Psychological Abuse - Causing fear or shame, intimidation, humiliation, or making threats.

Physical Abuse - Inflicting pain or injury eg hitting or slapping, restraining, over medicating or refusing medicine.

Sexual Abuse - Sexually abusive or exploitative behaviour, including rape, indecent assault, sexual harassment and indecent behaviour.

Social Abuse - Preventing a person from having social contact with family or friends.

Neglect - The intentional or unintentional failure to provide necessities of life and care.

Elder Abuse Information and Referral Phone Line (02) 6205 3535

The Elder Abuse Information and Referral Phone Line provides support, information and referral to services that may assist with abusive situations. This service is available to older people, their family, friends and others who are concerned about elder abuse. This line also assists service providers who work with older people who may be experiencing, or at risk of abuse. The line operates Monday to Friday during business hours (see number above).

If you are in immediate physical danger you should call the Police on 000 or 131 444

Seasons for Growth - What's it all about?

The Seasons for Growth small group provides a safe environment for people to explore their change and loss issues. Carers with a variety of caring experiences attend. Some Carers are bereaved and are interested in looking at how to manage their loss and grief; to explore with others what are "normal" feelings; and to share ways of making new meaning of their lives without their loved one. Carers who are still caring are also welcome to the group as it is recognised that caring can lead to enormous changes and loss, as well as positive gains. Carers may have to give up their jobs; stop some of their recreational activities; have disrupted sleep patterns; and not be able to maintain their current friendship networks. Caring may also lead to change in their hopes and expectations of life. For example, couples who had planned an active retirement may now be limited by

unexpected ill health and disability.

Some of the people who have attended Seasons for Growth groups at Carers ACT have said:

"Just being with other folk who have travelled this road of loss was useful"

"I looked forward to it each week"

"We, as a group, know each other better after 5 weeks and now speak more openly and less reservedly. Always something to be chewed over"

"The presenter is delightfully non-judgemental, open, honest about herself, caring and focused for each group member"

"The group gave me permission to review, remember and regurgitate etc"

"I gained a better understanding of my situation and how to deal with it".

Seasons for Growth - coping with change

Mondays, August 28th – September 25th 10.30 – 12.30pm

The Seasons for Growth Program is a five week program that discusses ways of coping with change and loss. We know that taking on a caring role can lead to enormous changes, often on-going, and subsequent losses as well as gains. The first session is a stand alone session; participants can then choose to do the additional four sessions if they wish to explore their own loss experiences in more depth.

Venue - Woden area TBA

Facilitator - Jill Pierce

Phone Jill on 6296 9913 to register.

Carers Calendar

June - July 2006



Clare Holland House Tour & Introduction to Palliative Care

In partnership with the ACT Palliative Care Society and Clare Holland House we will be running a session for Carers and their families on palliative care.

There will also be a brief tour of the hospice.

July 26th 10:30am - 12noon
Clare Holland House
Menindee Drive, Barton

Contact Michaela to RSVP
on 6296 9917.

Christmas in July

Join us for a fantastic night out to celebrate the spirit of Christmas.

The night will include a three course Christmas dinner, carols, spot prizes and a special gift from Santa.

Friday 14 July 2006
6:30pm – 11pm
Harmonie German Club
49 Jerrabomberra Ave,
Narrabundah

Cost: \$40 / \$30 (concession)

RSVP: To Mary on 6230 7629
or mary.gays@mhf.com.au by
Wednesday 5th July

Walking Group

Join us for fun, friendship and some fresh air!

Tuesday 13 June, 11am
Meet at Garran Shopping Centre,
Garran Place, Garran. Coffee to
follow at a nearby café.

Tuesday 11 July, 11am
Meet at Lyneham Shops, Wattle
Street, Lyneham. Coffee to follow
at a nearby café.

Please contact Roz for more
information on 6296 9943.

Art Appreciation Group

The Art Appreciation Group is lucky enough to experience a current exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) each month. You are invited to join this group of Carers on the third Tuesday of each month. You will be warmly welcomed. Please come and join us for a free exhibition, followed by coffee in the Gallery Café.

Tuesday 20 June
10am in the foyer of the NGA.
"Behind-the-scenes at the NGA".
Bookings essential.

Tuesday 20 July
10am in the foyer of the NGA.
"Drawing Tour"

Please contact Roz for more
information on 6296 9943.

Winter Seasonal Lunch

Tuesday 6 June 2006
12:30pm – 2:30pm
Belconnen Office CACT

Join us for a warm toasty lunch at
the Belconnen Carers ACT Office.

Come, make new friends and have
a chat with our staff.

Lunch will be provided. Call
Michaela on 6296 9917 to register.

Craft group

Thursday 22 June
10am – 2pm
Belconnen Office CACT

Thursday 27 July
10am – 2pm
Belconnen Office CACT

Join our lovely craft group. Bring
along your art and craft and show
off your talents, learn from the
other women in the group over
chat and cuppa.

Contact Michaela on 6296 9917 to
register.

St John's Senior First Aid Certificate Senior First Aid: Level 2

This course includes practical and
written assessment to receive the
certificate. Topics include CPR,
medical emergencies, first aid kits,
bites & stings, and limb injuries.
Attendance and participation in all
sessions is essential.

Saturdays - June 3, 10, 17, 24
1 – 5 pm

Where: Weston Creek Community
Centre Parkinson St, Weston

Trainer: Duncan Souter

This course is for family Carers
only, there are no course fees.

To register please ring 6207 3628
or email: CarerSkills@cit.act.edu.au

Circus Quirkus

The Circus Quirkus troupe,
sponsored by the Rotary Club of
Canberra are giving away free
tickets to Carers and their families.
Get in quick - limited number
available.

Saturday 1 July 1pm, 4pm, or 7pm.

Llewellyn Hall, School of Music, ANU

Please call Michaela on 6296 9917
to register.

When Caring gets you Down

Many Carers experience times of
feeling tired, low and wonder how
they will keep going. This short
course will explore the impact of
ongoing stress and depression
and look for ways to keep some
balance.

When: Mondays June 26, July 3,
10, 17 (4 weeks) 10am – 12 noon

Where: Room 1, Belconnen
Community Centre

Facilitator: Elizabeth Yuile

Please ring 6207 3628 or email:
CarerSkills@cit.act.edu.au to
register.

Support Groups Diary



After Caring Social Group

This group is for Carers whose cared for person has died.
New members welcome.
10:30am - 12:30pm
Venues vary. If you would like to come along please contact Jill on 6296 9913
Wed 28 June Group meeting
Wed 26 July Group meeting

Carers of a Person with a Disability

10am - 12noon 1st Wednesday of the month at Carers ACT Belconnen
Wed 7 June Open discussion
Wed 5 July Open discussion

Inner North Carers Support Group

10am - 12noon
Function Room, Majura Community Centre Rosevear Place, Dickson
All Carers Welcome
Fri 16 June Northside Community Services
Fri 21 July Open Discussion

Male Carers Support Group

11am - 1:30pm
2nd last Tuesday of the month
Canberra Southern Cross Yacht Club, Lounge, Lotus Bay Yarralumla
Tue 20 June Group meeting
Tue 18 July Group meeting

Northside Carers Support Group

10am - 12noon
Belconnen Community Centre, Room 2, Swanson Court, Belconnen
All Carers welcome
Wed 7 June Open discussion
Wed 5 July Arthritis ACT

Southside Carers Support Group

10:30am - 12noon
Weston Creek Community Centre, Parkinson St, Weston (next to Cooleman Court Shopping Centre)
All Carers Welcome
Tues 6 June Cancer Council ACT
Tues 4 July Open discussion

Tuggeranong Support Group

1:30pm - 3pm
2nd Monday of each month
Tuggeranong Community Centre,

245 Cowlshaw St, Tuggeranong
No meeting in June (Public holiday)
Queens Birthday Holiday
Mon 10 July Sharing recipes for easy to prepare meals

Afghani Support Group

12noon - 2pm
Canberra Museum & Gallery, London Circuit, Civic
Thurs 29 June Women's health
Thurs 27 July Arthritis

Arabic Support Group

10am - 12noon
Canberra Museum & Gallery, London Circuit, Civic
Tues 13 June YMCA
Tues 11 July Nutrition

Chinese Support Group

10am - 12noon
Canberra Museum & Gallery, London Circuit, Civic
Wed 7 June Group meeting
Wed 5 July Group meeting

Croatian Support Group

10am - 12noon
Canberra Museum & Gallery, London Circuit, Civic
No meeting in June (Public holiday)
Mon 10 July Arthritis

Filipino Support Group

1pm - 3pm
Canberra Museum & Gallery, London Circuit, Civic
Sat 10 June Carers ACT
Sat 8 July Arthritis

Finnish Support Group

No meeting in June
No meeting in July

Greek Support Group

10:30am - 12noon
Orpheus Room, Hellenic Club, Matilda Street, Woden
Thurs 8 June Carers ACT
Thurs 13 July Alzheimers

Indigenous Carers Support Group

10am - 2pm
Boomanulla Oval, Goyder Street, Narrabundah

Please phone Serena on 6296 9924 for assistance with transport.

Thurs 15 June Group meeting
Thurs 6 July Group meeting

Japanese Support Group

12:30pm - 2pm
Canberra Museum & Gallery, London Circuit, Civic
Wed 21 June Group meeting

1:30pm - 4pm

Canberra Museum & Gallery, London Circuit, Civic
Sat 22 July Group meeting

Macedonian Support Group

10am - 12noon
Macedonia Church, Crawford St, Queanbeyan
Thurs 22 June Arthritis
Thurs 20 July Nutrition

Polish Support Group

11am - 3pm
Polish Australian White Eagle Club, 34 David St, Turner
Tues 20 June PICAC
Tues 18 July Carers ACT

Spanish Support Carers

12:15pm - 2pm
Canberra Museum & Gallery, London Circuit, Civic
No meeting in June (Public holiday)
Mon 10 July Group meeting

Tamil Support Group

11am - 1pm
Pearce Community Centre
Sat 17 June Arthritis
Sat 15 July YMCA

Tongan Support Group

12noon - 2pm
Rosehill Tongan Community Hall, 30 Scattergood Place, Spence
Fri 30 June YMCA
Fri 28 July Alzheimers

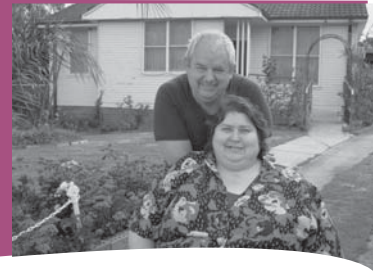
Vietnamese Support Group

10am - 12noon
Canberra Museum and Gallery, London Circuit, Civic
Tues 6 June PICAC
Tues 4 July Group Meeting



Carers ACT Courses

your wellbeing, understanding, coping, skills



Staying Afloat - Exploring ways to manage the challenges and stresses in life

Session content will be flexible to meet the needs of the group and may include:

- Stress management techniques
- Relaxation
- Sharing ideas on coping
- Ways of living with some sadness and frustration
- Celebrating and developing our strengths
- Communication skills

October 19th – November 23rd,
1:30pm – 3:30pm

Venue: Belconnen or Woden (TBC)

Contact: Jill Pierce (Group Counsellor)
on 6296 9913

A Saturday Workshop for Carers

Do you find it difficult to attend our activities during the week? Then this Saturday course is for you.

Come along to a one-day workshop to:

- Discover useful local information to assist you in your caring role
- Take time out to consider your own health and wellbeing
- Meet other Family Carers to share ideas and a laugh
- Enjoy an informative and fun day

Respite and transport can be arranged.

Lunch and refreshments provided.

When: Saturday 8 July, 10am – 4pm

Where: Carers ACT, Belconnen

Contact: Roz on 6296 9943 to register

Stress management course.

Carers ACT is running a 3 week stress management course. Session content will be flexible to meet the needs of the group and may include:

- recognising when we are stressed and identifying our stressors
- management techniques
- maintaining balance in our lives
- relaxation exercises

When: 19, 26 June & 3 July,
10am – 12pm

Venue: Room 2, Weston Creek
Community Centre
Parkinson St. Weston

Contact: For more information and bookings please phone Jill on 6296 9913

Palliative Care-Education Link Project

Carers ACT was funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, under the Caring Communities program, to run a project called Palliative Care - Education Link Project. The Project ran from February 2004 and was recently completed in April 2006. The Project was a community education project that was aimed at increasing the knowledge and skills of community workers in responding to, and supporting, families who are receiving palliative care. Carers ACT, in collaboration with the ACT Palliative Care Society, offered workshops to service providers, community groups, volunteers and Residential Aged Care Facilities. Twenty five workshops were conducted in a range of community settings.

The training included information about what support Palliative Care provides and how it is provided;

the experience of loss, grief and bereavement, especially for Carers; and practical ways to support families who are receiving Palliative Care. It also raised awareness of the need for looking after oneself in this work, and discussed ways of managing self-care.

The evaluations of the workshops indicated that participants appreciated the opportunity to reflect on grief and loss in a group situation, and were keen to learn how to best support Carers who are bereaved. Participants increased their knowledge of palliative care, the palliative care approach, services available in the community and how to access them.

The Project also ran sessions on Palliative Care at the Carer support groups, organised a retreat for volunteers working in bereavement support and organised two

seminars for palliative care workers on preventing burnout. More information on the Project can be gained by ringing Jill on 6296 9913.



Supporting Young Carers

By Natalie Tolley

I want to take this chance to introduce myself. My name is Natalie Tolley and I am the Young Carer Coordinator at Carers ACT.

About our Young Carers Program

Our Young Carer Program aims to minimise the risk of leaving school prematurely by providing respite, information and support to young Carers. This program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. The program's corporate sponsor - Ernst & Young also make significant financial contributions to the program through their Staff Giving Program.

The contributions from Ernst & Young allow us to provide tutoring and educational support to Young Carers to motivate them to stay in school while our respite services enhance their capacity to further their education.

Our Young Carers Program can help make your caring role a little bit easier. We can:

- listen to what you have to say
- hear what you need and help to make it happen
- give you opportunities to meet other young Carers who know exactly what you are going through
- help you have "time out" from your caring role

Nationally, Young Carer programs are aiming to provide support to as many Young Carers as we can. This includes raising awareness in schools, and the wider community, providing information and support to Young Carers and those who are involved in the lives of Young Carers, and investigating and providing appropriate respite.

We know that being a young Carer can be tough but it important to know that you don't have to do it all by yourself, that there is always someone to talk to and always someone who can help.

Who are Young Carers?

Young Carers are children and young people up to 25 years of age who help care in families where someone has an illness, a disability, a mental illness or who has an alcohol or other drug problem. The person they help care for might be a parent, a sibling, their own child, a grandparent or other relative, or maybe a friend.

Young Carers can take on either a primary or a secondary caring role. They can support their parents or someone else who may be the main source of support for the care recipient or they can take on a full time caring role.

There are an estimated 390,000 children and young people across Australia who help care for their relatives.

Is there a young Carer in your family? Do your children help you look after your loved ones? If they do they may be eligible for the Young Carer Program.

How to get in touch with us?

If you believe you know of a young carer who might need some support, if you are a young Carer, or if your own child may need some support or even just a chance to be involved in something fun, then please don't hesitate to give me a call at Carers ACT! We have Young Carer Kits available that we can send out as well, which have a lot of great information for young people on how to deal with things that they may be having some issues with, and a great booklet for parents on how to help understand and support your children.

Call me on 1800 242 636* to have a chat or to find out more about how we can help you or someone you know.

There is also a great Young Carers' website to check out at www.youngcarers.net.au



Lea's Story

A family Carer's Journey



In 2000, our son was a pedestrian hit by a car. He was severely, almost fatally, injured. He had just turned 18. Our whole life and family situation changed drastically.

At first, our time was spent at the hospital, willing our son to live, hoping he could survive the massive injuries caused by the car. During the first year I was just a mum, dealing with the trauma of a near fatal accident and the impact that had on our whole family. My husband and our two other almost adult children were also feeling pain, shock, loss and sorrow.

Luckily for our family, my husband was able to support us on his wage, while I stayed with our son, who desperately needed to have us around, as well as his siblings and friends.

The first three months were the worst, as our son was in a coma and we were told every day that he would not survive, or if he did he would be unable to communicate or participate in "normal" life.

Well, he did survive, and some months later, was transferred to a rehabilitation unit in Sydney. I stayed with him during his rehabilitation as he was very afraid and could not be left alone. We were there for eight months as he gradually became more independent and communicative.

I became a full-time family Carer when he was discharged from Sydney. I didn't think of myself as a "Carer" at that stage, but as time went by I became aware that I was more than just 'mum'.

I am his care provider, even when the community nurses come to help, his case manager when the community case manager could only see him every month, I am his advocate for all the things he needed to access through the outpatient and disability systems and far beyond. I am his legal advisor, finance manager, information disseminator and support worker. I became his psychologist, physiotherapist, personal trainer and occupational therapist when these excellent services were only available for monthly visits. There was a lot of learning to do and it was a steep curve for both of us!

I am responsible for encouraging and restraining him, helping him to value the 'small steps' he manages to accomplish daily and weekly. In some ways it was like having a newborn baby to care for and love, but he was a grown man by then. He had a sense of who he had been, but not quite of who he was becoming.

During the past six years, it has been a roller coaster. It has been heart - breaking as well as heart - warming, but overall a real sense of achievement for all of us, as we learn new ways to help realise his goals. It needs a whole different approach and often requires professionals and family together to think laterally and innovatively towards solutions.

Carers ACT helped me through some of the most difficult times and has supported me to become involved in the organisation and its issues as well as providing me with a network of friends and peers.

By Lea Hackett, Carer

Private Viewing at the NGA:

Imants Tillers: One world, many visitors

Michael Riley: Sights unseen

Saturday 29 July, 9:30am – 11:00am National Gallery of Australia

In collaboration with NGA, we would like to invite to the private viewing for Carers of Imants Tillers and Michael Riley. Imants Tillers is one of Australia's most acclaimed contemporary artists, who established a national and international reputation in the early 1980s and Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi artist Michael Riley (1960–2004) was one of the most important Indigenous visual artists of the past two decades. Riley has been selected as one of eight artists who will be represented in the significant Australian Indigenous Art Commission at the new Musée du quai Branly, due to open in Paris in June 2006.

RSVP: Please call Michaela on 6296 9917 or email michaelaa@carersact.asn.au by Monday 24 July 2006.

Notice Board

Book Corner

By Jill Pierce
Group Counsellor

Canberra After Suicide Support Group

Provides a safe place for parents, spouses, siblings, children, relatives, partners, companions, and friends of those who have died by suicide to come together for acceptance, understanding, support, sharing, talking, listening, respect and information.

CASS meets at 2pm on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month. [For more information please call 6292 6847.](#)

The Cottage Fete

The Carers Cottage at Deakin will be holding a fete on Saturday 16 September. We would welcome contributions of time and donations. [Please contact Claire or Jeanette on 6285 2082.](#)

FREE security and safety check

Concerned about your health and safety in your home? Call for a free security and safety check. All checks are carried out by uniformed police, fire and ambulance officers who can give you simple and easy steps to make your home safer. [Contact CLASP on 6282 3777 for more information.](#)

Centrelink Support for Bereaved Carers and those providing palliative care

Centrelink has produced a booklet called "Are you needing help after someone has died?" which gives Carers advice on your options for how to prepare for and cope with bereavement. The booklet contains advice and details about the Bereavement Payment and Allowance, as well as how to claim payments, what to do when someone dies and the support options that may be available to you. [Call Centrelink on 13 27 17 to order your copy.](#)

What is the future for effective mental health care services in the ACT?

Come and hear a FREE public presentation by Senator Gary Humphries, Keith Mahar (MIEACT President) and Sheelah Egan (MIEACT Public Officer).

When: Thursday, 8th June 2006 at 8 pm

Where: North Belconnen Uniting Church (off Goldner Circuit, Melba; opposite Melba High School)

Issue covered will include:

- What causes mental illness?
- How prevalent is mental illness and is its incidence increasing?
- Which age groups are most affected?
- What are some of the common myths and stigmas, which surround mental illness?
- Is the current system meeting the needs of individuals and families?
- How can effective treatment be efficiently delivered?

Questions will follow the presentations and tea/coffee will be available after the 9:30pm finishing time.

Jelly Bean's Secret

By Molly Carlile

Jelly Bean's Secret is a sensitive story about nine year old Abby and her much loved Grandmother Jelly Bean. Jelly Bean and Abby have fun together walking on the beach and working on their secret project. Then Jelly Bean has a stroke. The story takes us through the family members' different reactions to Jelly Bean's illness and eventual death. The book provides questions that parents can use to initiate discussion about living, dying, letting go and remembering. The book is aimed at Primary School children.

Both of these great books and hundreds more are available in our libraries at the Belconnen and Torrens offices. [Come in and see what resources we have that will help you in your caring role.](#)

What to do when someone dies

By Stella Tarakson

This book is a Choice Book put out by the Consumers Association, publishers of CHOICE magazine. It provides step by step practical information on what to do, and who to contact, after someone close to us dies. It discusses issues such as what to do when someone dies at home, gaining a death certificate, autopsies, and making a will.

This is an Australian book and would help people at a difficult and confusing time in their lives.



Who is Carers ACT?

Board of Management

President: Brian Joyce
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 Alison Medway
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 Susanne Oldfield

KEEP IN TOUCH!

Three months between newsletter issues is such a long time! How can you keep up with all of the events and information about Carers ACT?

You can log on to our website
www.carersact.asn.au
 to find out what events and activities we have planned for the next few weeks as well as all our news to keep you in the loop between newsletters.

Jill Pierce
 Pam Richardson
 Chris Sakul - Thongbai
 Gerard Sandi
 Maria Smith
 Jo Starr
 Jan Stirling
 Sophyla Sun
 Kerry Sweeny
 Judy Taylor
 Samantha Thomson
 Cecilia Tiberti
 Natalie Tolley
 Guy Travia
 Serena Williams
 Talitha Williams



An Australian Government Initiative



home and community care
A JOINT COMMONWEALTH AND STATE/TERRITORY PROGRAM
 PROVIDING FUNDING AND ASSISTANCE FOR AUSTRALIANS IN NEED

IF UNDELIVERED PLEASE RETURN TO:

Carers ACT Inc.
 Ground Floor, Churches Centre,
 Benjamin Way, BELCONNEN ACT 2617

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