

Carers Representation Program E Bulletin: 6 July 2011

Welcome to the fortnightly Carer Representation Program E-Bulletin
Informing you of Mental Health committee updates, news, events and more. This issue:

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AN EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITY!

Lunch with Gai Brodtmann

Carers ACT would like to invite you to a luncheon forum with Gai Brodtmann, Member for Canberra. The lunch will provide you with an opportunity to share your concerns about caring for someone with a mental illness and hear how these can be taken forward at the Federal parliamentary level. You will also be able to hear how the current reforms to the mental health system will assist ACT families affected by mental illness.

Where: Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Cres, Holt

When: Thursday 21st July

Time: 12.30 – 2 pm

RSVP: **By the 14th July** to Julia Paez on 6296 9952 or email juliap@carersact.asn.au

FEDERAL NEWS

New \$4M National Mental Health Consumer Body Launched

On 1st July, the Federal Government announced a grant of up to \$4 million to establish a new National Mental Health Consumer Organisation. The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing Mark Butler said the new organisation would be hosted by the Consumers Health Forum initially. The aim is to transition to a completely independent organisation after two years. "The establishment of the National Mental Health Consumer Organisation will ensure that the voice of mental health consumers is a central part of the Government's commitment to mental health reform" Mr Butler said.

A full text of the media release is available at:
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr11-mb-mb059.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2011&mth=07>

This fortnight's news is all Federally based. While it starts off with some very interesting articles Firstly, notification of organisations attending hearings into the inquiry into mental health and work. The link takes you to more information about the inquiry.

Inquiry Into Mental Health and Workforce Participation

Finding a job or getting into education can be hard at the best of times. Dealing with mental health issues while trying to begin work or study creates a whole new set of challenges. The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Employment has been hearing from the Black Dog Institute, Multicultural Mental Health Australia, Transcultural Mental Health, Macquarie University - Campus Wellbeing, Carers NSW and NSW Consumer Advisory Group - Mental Health Inc, and Wesley Mission at a public hearing in Sydney. The inquiry has also held meetings in Melbourne, where they heard from the National Employment Services Association, Lantern (Reach Out Employment), Occupational Therapy Australia, Social Firms Australia and the Australian Psychological Society, and Beyondblue. Carers Australia have also written a submission to this inquiry. Their submission is available on the Carers ACT Website at: <http://www.carersact.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Submission-to-HoR-Inquiry-into-Mental-Illness-and-Workforce-Participation.pdf>

For more information on the inquiry, go to: <http://www.aph.gov.au/ee>.

Next, some news for our Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities.

Mental Health In Multicultural Australia Project To Get \$2.7 Million

The Federal Government is continuing its efforts to support better mental health and wellbeing in culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD) with the Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre appointed, in partnership with a number of other centres Australia wide, to deliver a \$2.7 million multicultural mental health project. Australia is made of more than 200 unique cultural groups and

approximately 15 per cent of the population speaks a language other than English at home. Despite our cultural diversity, it's well documented that CALD communities are reluctant to access mental health services due to language and cultural barriers.

You will find out more about this project at: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr11-mb-mb054.htm>

Finally, an interesting report from the AIHW.

Diabetes Associated With Poor Mental Health And Wellbeing

Australians with diabetes have a higher prevalence of poor mental health and wellbeing than those without diabetes, according to a report released on 23rd June by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). The report, 'Diabetes and poor mental health and wellbeing: an exploratory analysis', shows that a significantly higher proportion of adults with diabetes had medium, high or very high levels of psychological distress compared with other Australians. "Diabetes and poor mental health and wellbeing are both common health conditions in Australia," said Anne Broadbent, AIHW spokesperson.

For more on this subject: <http://aihw.gov.au/media-release-detail/?id=10737419338> This page also has a link to the full report, if you wish to read it.

Senate Inquiry Into Mental Health

The Community Affairs References Committee will inquire into the changes to Better Access, the impact and adequacy of services provided through the Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) Program, services available for people with severe mental illness, mental health workforce issues, the adequacy of mental health funding and services for disadvantaged group, the delivery of a national mental health commission, the impact of online services and other related matters. "This is an important opportunity for anyone from professionals to patients with an interest in mental health and I urge all stakeholders to make a submission", says Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells,

Shadow Minister for Mental Health and Ageing. A number of organisations, including the Australian Medical Association (AMA), the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) have welcomed the Inquiry.

Their medial releases can be found at:

- <http://www.liberal.org.au/Latest-News/2011/06/15/Federal-Labor-half-hearted-on-mental-health.aspx>
- <http://www.liberal.org.au/Latest-News/2011/06/23/Senate-Inquiry-into-Mental-Health.aspx>
- <http://ama.com.au/node/6833>
- <http://ama.com.au/node/6852>
- www.racgp.org.au includes a link to the June 2011 journal, which is dedicated to Mental Health

Details will be available on the Senate Community Affairs Committee website shortly.

And last, but by no means least, an external audit of the ATAPS program:

Administration Of The Access To Allied Psychological Services Program (Ataps) Audit Report No.51

The object of this Australian National Audit Office Audit was to examine the effectiveness of the Department of Health and Ageing's (DoHA) administration of the ATAPS Program. The focus of the audit was on DoHA's administration of the ATAPS program, including systems and processes that the department employs to: guide its administrative efforts; manage day-to-day delivery of the program through a large number of third-party providers; plan and administer program initiatives; monitor compliance with program requirements; and report on the extent to which the program is achieving the objectives set by government.

This is an enormous document. If you wish to wade through it, it can be found here: <http://www.anao.gov.au/publications/?keywords=allied+psychological+services+program&pubTypes=3&years=0&portfolios=17&topics=0>

WHAT'S ON IN THE ACT THAT MIGHT INTEREST YOU

Help In Managing Long Term Conditions

What: Help in Managing Long Term Conditions.

Where: Belconnen & Phillip

When: beginning in July

Time: 6 week course. 2½ per week.

RSVP: Community Health Intake on 6207 9977

This is a FREE course designed to assist people of all ages living with conditions such as mental health issues or any condition lasting longer than 6 months. Carers and friends of people with chronic conditions are also encouraged to attend the course. Course topics includes pain and fatigue management, cognitive symptom management, dealing with negative emotions, communicating with health providers, physical activity and nutrition, action planning and problem solving and peer support.

Vista Vocational Services

What: Rehabilitation Return to Work Program for people with a mental illness.

- a. NorthSouth Contractors - gardening work
- b. Cafe Pazzini - hospitality work

Where: O'Connor & Canberra City

Who: Danial Strapa, 6205 1349, daniel@mifact.org.au

Web: www.mifact.org.au

ADVANCE NOTICE

Poppy Facilitated Playgroup

What: Playgroup for Belconnen families where the parent has a mental illness.

Where: West Belconnen

When: to commence in third term 2011

Time: 8 Tuesdays during school terms

RSVP: Belconnen Child & Family Centre, 6205 2904

Poppy West Belconnen will be a supported playgroup conducted which aims to assist parents to feel confident and capable of raising their own children,

while reducing the impact of parental mental health problems on the infant's development. Poppy Playgroup is for parents affected by mental health problems who find it difficult to attend mainstream playgroups and who would benefit from a specialist program. These parents will need to have community-based support for their mental health presentation.

Mindscapes National Short Film Competition 2011

What: "No Health without Mental Health"

There are three categories so everyone to share their ideas on the theme:

- a. Open - anyone is able to enter a film into this category.
- b. Consumer and Carers - Mental Health Consumers and their Carers can enter a film into this category if they choose.
- c. Student: High School, College or Tertiary Students can enter this category if they choose.

It's your chance to show in 7 minutes or less, what you think about the theme.

Where: shortlisted films will be shown at the Mindscapes Short Film Festival

When: 12th of October 2011

Time: Entries close on Friday the 2nd of September.

RSVP: Rachel Muller on 02 62497756 or admin@mhccact.org.au

MENTAL HEALTH CARER REPRESENTATION PROGRAM

New Mental Health Carer Representatives.

Thank you to all who nominated for the Carer Representative positions on the Working Groups. As there was only one group which received more than one nomination and Carers ACT has been advised of that group's choice of representative, we can report that the successful candidates for the Carer Representative positions are:

1. TRec Advisory Group: Viginia Wilton
2. RAC: Advanced Care Agreements: Murray Haines
3. RAC: Children & Youth: Jenny McGee

4. RAC: Decision Making Capacity: Eunice Jolliffe
5. RAC: Involuntary Physical Care: Jennifer Rolfe
6. HASI Alternate Delegate: Judy Bentley

Congratulations! You will be contacted shortly by your Advisory/Working Group contact people to advise you of your positions and other details.

Feedback On The Rosenberg Review.

Thank you to all you gave us feedback. The feedback came in writing, by phone and in person. We have taken time to address as far as possible the feedback received, including progressing the selection process for the Carer member of the Selection Panel, and revising the other members of the Panel. This will be sent out in a separate email. Look for this in your mailbox soon!

Status Of Current Mental Health Carer Representatives

We have had a number of enquiries about the restructure of Mental Health ACT, and what this means for current Carer Representatives on committees, advisory and working groups of this department. As it stands at the moment, all current Carer Representatives will maintain their Representative positions until further notice. The contact people from your particular committees, advisory and working groups will contact you as usual about meetings, etc. When the Division of Mental Health, Justice Health, Alcohol & Drugs has completed the revision of their committees and processes, and lets us know of this, we will inform you.

NOTES ON NOTES

With the Rosenberg review and the development of new processes and forms flowing from that, there has been a lot to digest in a very short space of time. New processes and new forms can be very daunting initially, especially when they look very formal and official . . .

I thought, for a while, we might use this e-bulletin to highlight some of the issues that have come to light.

How To Report On A Committee, Advisory Or Working Group Meeting.

I have received some comments from Carer Representatives about not being allowed to report outside their meetings about what has happened within their meetings.

The important part of the reporting form for mental health Carers, whom you represent is the ideas, topics, etc that have been discussed at your meetings. However, the reporting that Mental Health Carers ACT is asking for in order to report to your constituency definitely does not require you to break any meeting confidentiality. A broad brush stroke is enough . . . for example: 'intake procedures', 'committee minutiae', 'looked at documents relevant to the xxx program', may be enough for some. You may prefer to report in greater detail, when this does not breach meeting confidentiality, and this is quite ok as well.

"The important part of the reporting form for mental health Carers, whom you represent is the ideas, topics, etc that have been discussed at your meetings."

Any sections of the reporting form that are not relevant for your committee can be left blank, or just listed as 'not relevant'. . . for example: your meeting may not have discussed any Carer issues.

If you're up to the 5th iteration of the same documents, it is always ok to put down 'xxx documents #5' if you feel that's appropriate.

The important part of the documents for Mental Health Carers ACT processes are:

1. The support that Mental Health Carers ACT can provide you with,
2. Your name, as well as the name, date and next meeting date of your committee, advisory or working group, and
3. Whether you have applied for remuneration, or whether we need to do that for you.

You are also welcome to call me on 6296 9900 or email me, lydias@carersact.asn.au if you have any questions, or anything that needs further clarification.