

Mental Health Carers Participation And Representation Program E Bulletin - 20 October 2011

CARERS WEEK: 16 - 22 OCTOBER ANYONE, ANYTIME, CAN BE A CARER

NEWS

FEDERAL NEWS

NDIS UPDATES

ACT NEWS

WHAT'S ON IN THE ACT THAT MIGHT INTEREST YOU

CARER REPRESENTATION NEWS

NEWS

Carers Week 2011 - Anyone, anytime, can be a Carer

This week, 16th – 22nd October is Carers Week. During Carers Week, events and activities have been held across Australia to recognise, celebrate and support Australia's 2.6 million carers. Carers Week provides a great opportunity for the wider community to understand the diversity of Carers who provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, a mental illness, a chronic condition, a terminal illness or who are frail and aged. Carers come from all backgrounds and all walks of life and are as diverse as we are as a nation. Carers live in our cities, suburbs, towns and in regional and remote Australia.

This year's Carers Week theme emphasises that **Anyone, Anytime, Can be a Carer**. Caring, whilst being challenging and demanding at times, can be very rewarding; enriching friendships and relationships. "We want to raise awareness that the caring role is really very much about the caring relationship and that caring can be a very positive experience," said Ara Cresswell, CEO of Carers Australia. "Carers are the foundation of our aged, disability, community, mental health and palliative care systems. Without Carers these systems would simply collapse."



The Hon Mark Butler MP addresses the Carers Week 2011 National Launch at Parliament House on Friday 14 October

ACT Carers Charter

For Carers Week, Carers ACT held a lunch for Carers on Wednesday 19th and organised a private guided tour of Infinite Horizons, an exhibition by Fred Williams, at the National Gallery of Australia on Thursday 20th. Both events were sold out successes.

Joy Burch, MLA, Minister for Community Services, attended the lunch and launched the ACT Carers Charter.

The Charter aims to recognise Carers, their needs and the contributions they make.

There will be more about this in the next e-bulletin.

FEDERAL NEWS

Recognising Australian Carers - Carers Week 2011 Launch

Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Mark Butler, and Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers, Senator Jan McLucas, launched 2011 Carers Week at Australian Parliament House on 14th October. "Australia's 2.6 million carers dedicate their time and energy to care for family members, friends or others in the community," Mr Butler said. Carers are the unsung heroes of our country. The invaluable work that they carry out supporting people with needs underpins the lives of many families right across the country.

Minister Butler also commented on the usefulness of the forums he held across the country that helped him better understand the issues and needs of those with mental illness and their carers. This engagement was critical in shaping the new mental health reform package recently announced by the Australian Government.

For more information on Australian Government funded support services for Carers, go to: www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/carers.

Mark Butler in Canberra for Aged Care Conversation

The Minister for Health and Ageing, Mark Butler, is holding a series of community conversations around the country listening to what people have to say about aged care, in a similar style to the community forums held about mental health reform. These conversations provide an opportunity to discuss the Productivity Commission's recently released Caring for Older Australians report, as well as a broader ageing agenda. The Minister is interested in hearing the experiences and thoughts of people with experiences relating to ageing, including those of Carers who are ageing, and of older people who are experiencing mental illness

and their Carers. Mr Butler will be in Canberra on 8th November. Details are in the What's On section of this e-bulletin.

Further details about these conversations can be found at: <http://agedcareconversations.govspace.gov.au>.

To read the Caring for Older Australians Report, please go to: <http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/aged-care/report>

Allan Fels Appointed Mental Health Commissioner

Professor Allan Fels, formerly the head of the ACCC, has been appointed Chairman of the National Mental Health Commission. Prof Fels has championed mental health reform and governance issues for many years. The Commission aims to provide cross-sectoral leadership in mental health, and to drive transparency and accountability in the mental health system in order to deliver better outcomes for consumers and carers. The Commission's responsibilities include:

- Managing and administering the Annual National Report Card on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention;
- Monitoring and reporting on the performance of the mental health system;
- Developing, collating and analysing data and reports from a range of sources;
- Providing mental health policy advice to government; and
- Engaging consumers and carers in mental health policy and service improvements.

The first task for the Mental Health Commission is to produce a National Report Card on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention for the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2012.

Further Evidence Of Record Investment In Mental Health Services

New data released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) shows that spending on mental health related services is continuing at record levels. The data is available on a new website, Mental Health Services in Australia, launched during National Mental Health Week. The website will complement the work

of the National Mental Health Commission in driving a more accountable and transparent mental health system. The AIHW also produces an annual snapshot of what the data show. The first of these snapshots, Mental Health Services: In brief 2011, is available on the website.

The AIHW's Mental Health Services in Australia website is at <http://mhsa.aihw.gov.au>. The report is found at www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=10737420189

NDIS UPDATES

1. Select Council On Disability Reform To Meet For The First Time

The Select Council of Treasurers and Disability Ministers which was established by the COAG to consider the fundamental reform of Australia's disability support services has met for the first time on 20th October. At this meeting the Council will consider the foundation reforms that are necessary to develop the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The Select Council will provide an initial report to COAG at the first meeting in 2012.

For more on this, go to: http://www.jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/mediareleases/2011/Pages/SelectCouncilondisabilityreformtomeetthisweek_16oct_2011.aspx

2. National Disability Insurance Scheme Advisory Group Appointments

The Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, and the Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers, Senator Jan McLucas, announced the appointment of people to the National Disability Insurance Scheme Advisory Group on 7th October. The Advisory Group will help steer the development of a NDIS by providing advice on the foundation reforms required to improve the system of care and support for Australians with disability and their carers. They will work closely with all governments and with the disability sector. They intend to conduct a series of community workshops around the country. The NDIS Advisory Group will

be supported by expert working groups to provide technical expertise and advice on specific elements of these reforms.

More information on the National Disability Insurance Scheme is available at www.fahcsia.gov.au

3. Spread the Word Week: November 27 - December 3

The Every Australian Counts Campaign is promoting the National Disability Insurance Scheme through Spread the Word Week which will be held between November 27 and December 3. The specific goal of Spread the Word Week is to grow the number of registered supporters in the Every Australian Counts Campaign from 80 000 to 100 000 by the end of 2011. For people with "significant and enduring psychiatric disability" the Productivity Commission has recommended the inclusion of non-clinical support needs within the NDIS. This recommendation was influenced by evidence provided by the Australian Community, including from Carers ACT.

If you would like to learn more about the NDIS proposed by the Productivity Commission go to: <http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/disability-support/report>. If you would like to learn more about the Every Australian Counts Campaign, and about Spread the Word Week, then go to <http://everyaustraliancounts.com.au>.

ACT NEWS

New Mental Health Website Launched

On 11th October, World Mental Health Day, a mental health social network website, MentaNet, was launched. MentaNet's objective is to raise awareness of recovery, to inspire hope, to inform people about support services/research/recovery planning etc, and to connect people interested in mental health. Keith Mahar, from Woden Community Services, was instrumental in setting up this website. Carers ACT applauds this venture, and wishes it well.

To read about MentaNet go to: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/innovation-on-world-mental-health-day-131447553.html>.

To join MentaNet go to: www.mentalympians.org

WHAT'S ON IN THE ACT THAT MIGHT INTEREST YOU

What: Family Carers supporting someone with a mental illness

When: Wednesdays 19th October - 23rd November (6 sessions)

Time: 10am – 12 noon

Where: CIT Southside Campus, Woden

Cost: Free

Register: 6207 3628 or CarerSkills@cit.edu.au

What: Quarterly Community Forum

When: Wednesday 26th October

Time: 5.30 – 7.00 pm

Where: Griffin Centre, Genge St, Canberra City

Topic: Mental Health Community Policing Initiative & MHJHADS Updates.

Contact: 6249 7756

What: Partners in Depression

A 6 week education program

When: Wednesdays: 26th October – 30th November

Time: 5.00 – 7.00 pm

Where: Phillip Health Centre

Contact: Hanneka Symonds 6205 1469 or

hanneka.symonds@act.gov.au

John Reinhard 6205 1488 or

john.reinhard@act.gov.au

What: Rainbows 10th Birthday Celebration

When: Friday 4th November

Time: 6.30 – 10.30 pm

Where: Canberra Technology Park, Phillip Ave, Watson

Dress: After 6 wear

Cost: \$30

RSVP: Wednesday 26th October

To: 6242 6575 or email rainbow@mfh.org.au

What: A Conversation with Mark Butler – improving aged care health system

When: Tuesday 8th November

Where: Southern Cross Club, Phillip

Time: 2pm - 4pm

Invitation Only: To request an invitation, please call: 1800 182 324

CARER REPRESENTATION NEWS

Please Note:

Carers ACT CEO, Dee McGrath, will be overseeing the Policy & Communications section of Carers ACT while a new manager is being recruited. This means that for strategic and policy communications she is the person to be contacted on deem@carersact.asn.au. For mental health communications, especially related to committees, etc, please continue to contact Lydia on lydias@carersact.asn.au. Or both of us can be phoned on 6296 9900.

Selection Panel Carer Member Update

Carers Voice received four nominations for the Carer Member of the Selection Panel. Thank you to all who nominated, and to those who considered nominating. A panel made up of the Chief Executive Officers of the Carers ACT, Dee McGrath, the Mental Health Community Coalition, Brooke McKail, and the Mental Health Consumer Network, Dalane Drexler, is currently examining the nominations received and will meet to decide on the Carer Member soon. That person will be announced in the next e-bulletin. This is the first step in the selection process for Carer representatives on ACT Government committees and subcommittees.

Selection Process For Carer Representatives Update

The documents for this process are currently being finalised. A special e-bulletin will be sent in early November to start this process. Carers ACT will also be holding a special workshop in early November on **Carer Representation: What is it? Is it for me?** to help you decide whether to nominate as a Carer representative. Details are still being finalised for this workshop, so look out for this soon.

Representative Positions Vacant

Although this is not a Carers ACT or mental health specific council, we thought that a female mental health Carer might be an interesting addition to this council.

The ACT Minister for Women, Joy Burch, MLA, recently announced that nominations are being sought for membership of the 2012-2013 ACT Ministerial Advisory Council on Women. Applications are invited from individual women and representatives of women's



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organisations and peak bodies in the ACT who are able to demonstrate commitment to the advancement of women, a sound knowledge of the interests and concerns of ACT women and an ability to consult and represent on a wide range of women's issues. Nominations close on 11 November 2011.

Information about the Ministerial Advisory Council on Women is available on the Women ACT website: www.women.act.gov.au or by contacting the ACT Office for Women by phone on 6207 2552 or email: women@act.gov.au.