

# Carers Representation Program E Bulletin: 6 September 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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## Federal News

### COAG Delivers Key Step For National Disability Insurance Scheme

The Prime Minister, and the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) have agreed on the need for major reform of disability services in Australia through a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). This follows the release of the Productivity Commission's final report into Disability Care and Support. COAG will develop high-level principles by the end of the year to guide consideration of the Productivity Commission's recommendations regarding a National Disability Insurance Scheme, including for foundation reforms, funding and governance.

COAG also agreed to form a Select Council of Ministers from Commonwealth, States and Territories to start work immediately to lay the foundations for an NDIS. The prospective NDIS will include provision for psychiatric disability. All states, territories and the commonwealth government have agreed to work together towards this historic change.

There are many places to find more information about the NDIS. This website contains the Productivity Commission's report: <http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/disability-support>.

### Experts Gather To Guide Better Coordination For Mental Health Consumers

A forum for mental health Consumers, Carers, community workers, counsellors, doctors and nurses have provided input to the Coordinated Care measures announced in this year's budget. The Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) hosted this forum on 11th August. The forum feedback session was attended by the Minister for Mental Health & Ageing, Mark Butler. This is the first step in the consultation process about the Coordinated Care measure.

The full text of this press release can be found at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr11-mb-mb097.htm>

## Carers ACT

### Reminder - Adult Acute Mental Health Unit Values And Philosophy Feedback Workshop

The ACT Division of Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol & Drugs Services (MHJHADS) is holding a feedback session on the proposed values and philosophy for the new Adult Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit (AAMHIU). This is the new psychiatric ward that is being built at The Canberra Hospital, which is due to open next February, 2012.

The proposed values and philosophy of the new AAMHIU are quite a shift from the old PSU. They represent a move to a person-focussed recovery model of care and should make the AAMHIU a much more pleasant experience for both Consumers and Carers, when hospitalisation is required.

Come along to hear about this new set of principles, and share a cuppa as well. On Wednesday 7th September in the Training Room of Carers ACT in Holt. You are welcome to just turn up at the time, but an RSVP to Lydia on 6296 9900, or [lydias@carersact.asn.au](mailto:lydias@carersact.asn.au) would help us know how many cups we need.

**Note.** See also the Advance Agreements Carer Representative Report for a little on this.

### Carer Issues Forum

The next Carer Issues Forum will be held in the Smith Family building in Woden on Wednesday 21st September from 6 – 7.30 pm. A light supper will be served.

Karl Jordt, a Financial Information Service Officer for Centrelink, now the Department of Human Services – Centrelink, is going to speak about Carer Payment, Carer Allowance, Carer Supplement, and the criteria for these payments. He is also able to take questions. This forum is in response to a number of questions, comments and stories raised at the lunch with Gai Brodtman a couple of months ago. We hope you can attend.

### WHAT'S ON IN THE ACT THAT MIGHT INTEREST YOU

**What:** MIEACT Volunteer Training Information Evening

**Where:** unstated, you will need to contact MIEACT for the address

**When:** Tuesday 6th September

**Time:** 5.30 – 7 pm

**RSVP:** [linda@mieact.org.au](mailto:linda@mieact.org.au) or 6257 1195

**To:** Linda

**What:** Emotional Mastery for Family Carers

**Where:** CIT Southside Campus, Woden

**When:** Tuesday evenings: 6th, 13th, 20th & 27th September

**Time:** 6 – 8 pm

**Cost:** Free

**RSVP:** [carerskills@cit.edu.au](mailto:carerskills@cit.edu.au) or 6207 3628

**To:** Jenny

**What:** Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Bill 2010 consultation

**When:** closes Friday 9th September

**Resource:** Documents can be found at:

<http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/home/publications/wwwvpc>

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**What:** Lifeline's Out of the Shadows Suicide Prevention Walk

**Where:** Lake Burley Griffin: meet at Gallipoli Reach, walk to Aspen Island

**When:** Saturday 10th September

**Time:** 5.30 – 7 am (yes, really am. It's a dawn walk.)

**RSVP:** [ootscanberra@gmail.com](mailto:ootscanberra@gmail.com) or 6215 9400

**To:** Debbi or Tom

**Website:** [www.outoftheshadows.org.au](http://www.outoftheshadows.org.au)

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**What:** Carer Issues Forum

**Where:** Smith Family, cnr Easty and Launceston Sts, Phillip

**When:** Wednesday 21st September

**Time:** 6 – 7.30 pm

**RSVP:** Monday 19th September

**To:** Lydia on [lydias@carersact.asn.au](mailto:lydias@carersact.asn.au) or 6296 9900

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**What:** BBQ & Support Group for people with PTSD, and other interested people

**Where:** 9 Burkitt St, Page

**When:** Last Sunday of every month (except December)

**Next:** 25th September

**Time:** 11.30 for noon BBQ

**Cost:** \$10 for BBQ

**Information:** [info@pickingupthepeaces.org.au](mailto:info@pickingupthepeaces.org.au) or 6255 1599

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**What:** ACT Consumer Companion Training

**Where:** Brian Hennessy Rehabilitation Centre

**When:** 17th & 18th October

**Cost:** Free

**RSVP:** 7th October

**To:** [giselle.morgan@act.gov.au](mailto:giselle.morgan@act.gov.au) or 6205 1222  
[catherine.fos@act.gov.au](mailto:catherine.fos@act.gov.au) or 6205 1756

## GENERAL BITS OF INTEREST

### Centrelink Social Workers

If you are a Consumer or Carer and have comments on Centrelink social workers, including access and availability, would you contact [liz.ruck@mhca.org.au](mailto:liz.ruck@mhca.org.au) who is very interested in hearing from you.

### Vista Vocational Services

Vista's mission is to promote the recovery of people with a mental illness through meaningful employment. As well as our vocational rehabilitation program which operates Cafe Pazzini and NorthSouth Contractors, Vista also has a Learning Centre which offers an e-learning program that enables trainees to undertake selected components of the VET Certificate II in Hospitality by computer access.

In order to facilitate trainees' access to the learning program, Vista has established a Learning Centre in its O'Connor offices, which will provide access for the trainees to do the certificate program if they do not have other computer access. It is also intended that other consumers will have the opportunity to use the Learning Centre.

## UPDATE ON THE REVIEW OF THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT

This update is written by two staff members of MHJHADS. It has been taken from their July/August newsletter. Carers ACT has mental health Carer representatives on all these working groups, as well as on the Oversight Advisory Group. The update has been edited to take out direct references applicable only to the Division, and to conserve space for those who print the e-bulletin.

## PROGRESS ON THE REVIEW OF THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT

From Julia Bocking and Steve Druitt (MHJHADS)  
(edited report)

Now is a particularly exciting time in the review of this significant piece of legislation. The review has been underway for around five years. The pace has now picked up considerably.

## The Process

The consultation period has ended this week. There are now six working groups attached to the Review Advisory Committee that are working through specific aspects of the legislation. They are:

### 1. Children and Youth

The current Mental Health Act does not include a section addressing the needs of children and young people where they differ from those of adults. This group is building on previous work to develop this section for the new Act.

### 2. Advance Agreements

The work of the group is to determine how Advance Agreements will be recognised in the Act. There has been solid discussion about the protection of 'negative treatment options' ie. treatment that the Consumer has indicated in their Advance Agreement that they do not want.

### 3. Principles and Objectives

The principles & objectives underpinning the Act are being revised to include changes in the approach to the delivery of mental health services since 1994, including incorporation of recovery principles.

### 4. Technical Changes

There are a number of technical changes that have been suggested to improve the operation of the Act.

### 5. Involuntary Physical Care

This group is considering provisions for the Act to allow involuntary physical treatment where there are physical conditions related to mental illness. This is also allied to broader consideration of involuntary physical treatment.

### 6. Decision making capacity

Inclusion of decision making capacity as a criterion for making mental health orders has been agreed but work is continuing to determine how the model will inform the language and provisions of the revised Act.

### Latest Developments

On 5 July 2011 Cabinet approved several framework decisions for the revised Act. The most high profile of these was the inclusion of 'decision making capacity' as a criterion for deciding whether a person should be placed on an involuntary treatment order. Other criteria around risk, etc are being retained. This aspect of a person's mental state is already frequently considered in assessment and also underlies current applications for orders.

The inclusion of 'decision making capacity' as a criterion is in line with changes occurring in mental health legislation around Australia and internationally. It will also help to make the basis for involuntary or substituted decisions on treatment similar to guardianship law which operates in the medical health area.

### Next Stages

The working groups will produce recommendations which will feed into drafting instructions which the Parliamentary Counsels Office will use to write the first Exposure Draft of the revised Act. This process takes a while. The Exposure Draft is planned to be ready for public consultation in May 2012.

## CARER REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

### ADVANCE AGREEMENTS WORKING GROUP

There was broad agreement on the need to make provision for reconsideration of an Advance Agreement (AA) if it is made in the private system and the person transfers to the public system. It is recognised that Dr Oram's finding in research that about one week after a relapse is the best time for a person to make an Advance Agreement should be incorporated in related Operating procedures.

Recovery is recommended for inclusion in the new AAMHIU in the Principles of the new AAMHIU. The suggestion of integrating Recovery Plans and AAs was discussed again, however this may be more a matter for Operating procedures.

Most members felt that the legislation should require the right balance for AAs between legal force and flexibility for the treating doctor. One person not in agreement with the recognition level of AAs as stated, and feels the treating team and Tribunal should 'have regard to' AAs, or 'show how they have taken them

into account' and 'record reasons why treatment has departed from the AA'.

Advice is still awaited from the ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JaCS) on what legal force can be given to positive and negative elements (treatment preferences) of AAs, including whether they can have power similar to an enduring power of attorney.

### Consultation Questions

Your Carer Representative would like your response to these questions. These will be taken back to the Advance Agreement Working Group, and will help your Carer Representative in their role there. Please reply to [mhcarers@carersact.asn.au](mailto:mhcarers@carersact.asn.au) and we will pass your responses on. (There will be a less cumbersome way than this coming soon . . .)

1. Are mental health Carers aware of Advanced Agreements?
2. Has anyone seen one?
3. Does anyone have one in place?
4. How should Carers be involved in the preparation and use of Advanced agreements?
5. How should Carers be involved in a crisis when it may be necessary to vary from an existing Advanced Agreement?

## REPRESENTATIVE POSITIONS VACANT

### Women and Mental Health Working Group.

Are you interested in the experiences and needs of women living with mental health issues in the ACT?

The ACT Women & Mental Health Working Group (WMHWG) identifies issues impacting on women with mental health issues in the ACT and works towards providing improved outcomes for those women. It works towards developing women friendly services, documenting the stories of women and ensuring their voices are heard in the mental health sector.

### Over the past year, achievements of the WMHWG include advising and supporting the secretariat to:

- Launch the research report Out of Reach, Women living with mental health issues in the ACT: What hinders their access to legal support?
- Conduct two research projects into peer support for women living with mental health issues in the ACT, and women who are mental health carers.
- Provide submissions to Government consultations

and Parliamentary inquiries advocating for women living with mental health issues in the ACT.

- Advocate for women living with mental health issues in the ACT through participating in ACT Health Directorate working groups and various ACT mental health forums, and working with mental health peak organisations.

The WMHWG meets bi-monthly. Members of the WMHWG currently include women mental health consumers and carers, representatives of service providers and advocacy organisations, and government representatives.

Both male and female Carers of female Consumers are welcome to nominate for this position. A Nomination Form is attached to this e-bulletin.

For more information, or if you have any questions, please email [lydias@carersact.asn.au](mailto:lydias@carersact.asn.au) or phone Lydia on 6296 9900.