

# Carers Circle

Supporting Family Carers



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“Carers Week 2011 is on from 16–22 October and to celebrate we have lined up a couple of special events for Carers. To find out about these and all our other events, courses and support groups, simply read on!”

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## CEO's Message

**Welcome to the spring edition of Carers Circle.**

In this issue we report on the recently announced National Carers Strategy as well as the latest developments with the National Disability Insurance Scheme, both of which are promising initiatives for Caring families. We also present the views of Carers who discussed mental health issues with Member for Canberra, Gai Brodtmann, at a lunchtime event we hosted in late July.

The results of our Annual Client Survey are now in and we are very pleased to report that 86% of Carers surveyed were satisfied with the services they received – we have a short article on this and we welcome you to also read the full report which is available on our website.

Finally, Carers Week 2011 is on from 16–22 October and to celebrate we have lined up a couple of special events for Carers. To find out about these and all our other events, courses and support groups, simply read on!

**Dee McGrath**  
Chief Executive Officer



## National Carer Strategy Launched

The Australian Government's launch of the National Carer Strategy on 3 August is an important step forward for the nation's 2.6 million Carers.

At the heart of the strategy is the vision that "Carers are valued and respected by society and that they have rights, choices, opportunities and capabilities to participate in economic, social and community life." The ten-year strategy, which complements the *National Carers Recognition ACT 2010*, outlines six key action areas and commits \$60 million.

Development of the strategy included consultation with more than 300 Carers across the country. Among the many priority issues raised were the need for the health sector to better recognise family carers as partners in care, the need for improved financial security, and the need for initiatives to enable Carers to work.

Speaking at the strategy launch, Carers Australia President Tim Moore, highlighted the broadening of the Carer Allowance eligibility for Carers of children with diabetes as well as initiatives to support Carers to work as particularly positive. He also said that the strategy identified ways to improve health sector recognition and support of Carers, but that States and Territories will need policies and safeguards to ensure it happens. He also pointed out that "greater consideration" is needed on how to ensure the financial stability of Carer families.

Mr Moore described the strategy as "an important and valuable document that will, no doubt, have a positive effect on the lives of Carers" and that the next challenge is to "...demonstrate a measurable improvement across the key priorities in an acceptable timeframe for the Carer community."

Carers ACT also welcomed the strategy and in an interview with ABC radio, Chief Executive Officer, Dee McGrath encouraged the ACT Government to use the

document as a framework to address urgent policy and service gaps in the Territory.

"Carers in the ACT are telling us that there is a significant shortage of accommodation options for people with disabilities and mental illness. We also need more options for young people with a disability when they leave school," she said.

### Strategy Key Points

#### Six Priority Areas

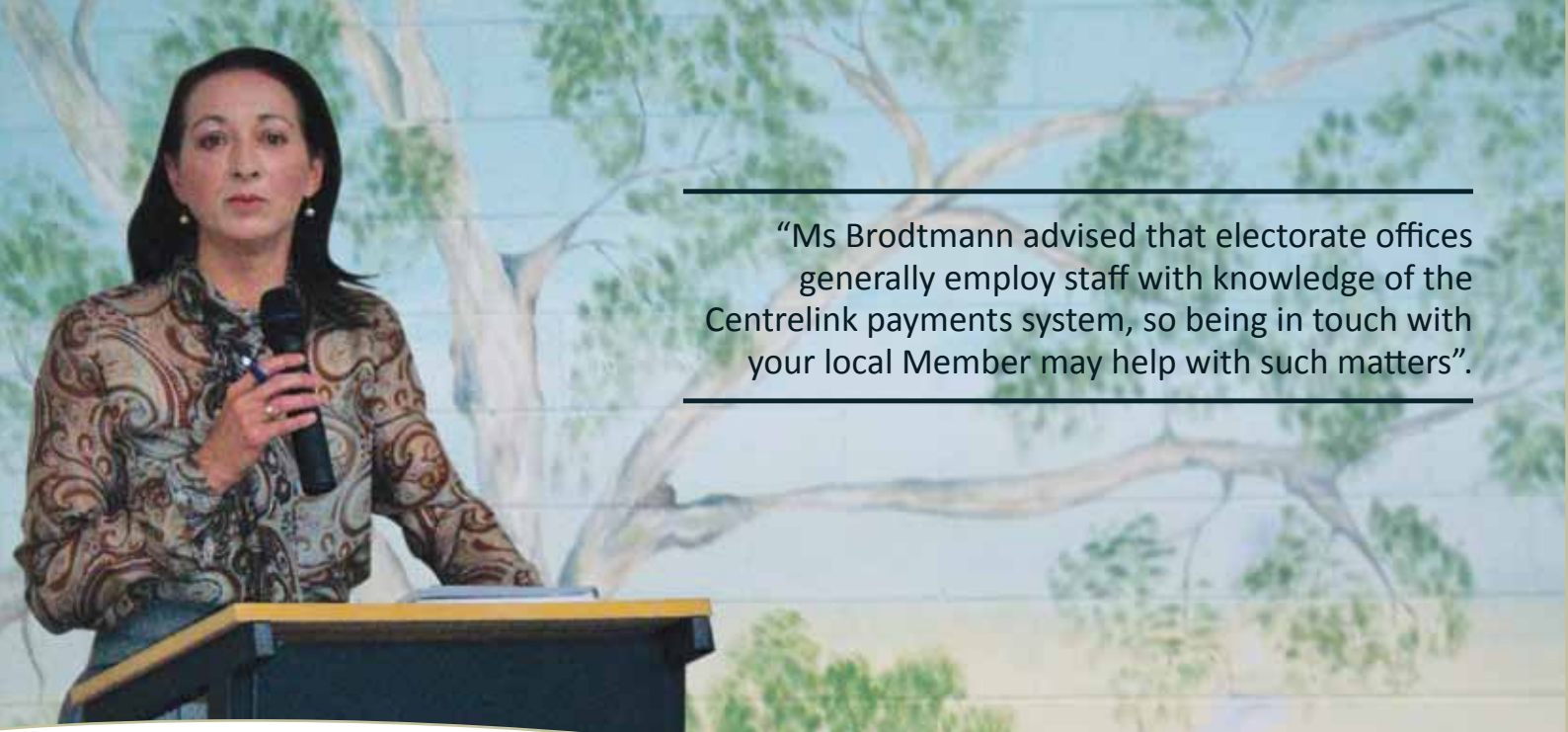
- |                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Recognition and respect | 4. Services for Carers    |
| 2. Information and access  | 5. Education and training |
| 3. Economic security       | 6. Health and wellbeing   |

### Funding Announcements

1. \$42.6 million over four years to extend automatic eligibility for Carer Allowance (child) for carers of children with Type 1 Diabetes aged between 10 and 16 years.
2. \$10.3 million over four years to continue Carer Adjustment Payment, a one-off payment to families where, following a catastrophic event involving a child aged 0–6 years, the family has to make significant adjustments to meet the child's care needs.
3. \$2.9 million over four years to ensure fairer access to the Carer Supplement.
4. \$2.1 million over four years to ensure fairer access to Bereavement Payment.
5. \$1.6 million over two years to fund a national, targeted campaign to raise public awareness of the role and contribution of Carers.
6. \$1 million to hold a young Carer festival in each State and Territory.

To find out more about the National Carer Strategy including to download a copy, visit our website:

[www.carersact.asn.au](http://www.carersact.asn.au)



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“Ms Brodtmann advised that electorate offices generally employ staff with knowledge of the Centrelink payments system, so being in touch with your local Member may help with such matters”.

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## Gai Brodtmann Meets Mental Health Carers

**Federal Labor Member for Canberra, Gai Brodtmann, met with 30 Carers to discuss mental health issues at a luncheon hosted by Carers ACT on 21 July.**

Ms Brodtmann talked about the Federal Government’s mental health package which was announced in May. Among the highlights she pointed to included initiatives to improve the mental wellbeing of young Australians, greater emphasis on primary healthcare, significant investment in data collection and research into mental illness, and the use of new psychiatric medications. Ms Brodtmann stressed that these initiatives are intended to be the first step in a 10-year reform program for Australia’s mental health system.

Ms Brodtmann also advised mental health Carers on how to effectively advocate for change to the mental health system, emphasising the need for unified key messages and to utilise peak bodies such as Carers ACT and Carers Australia. She also stressed the importance of bringing solutions as well as problems to the Government’s attention.

Mental health Carers were then invited to share their perspectives on issues of greatest concern. A number of common themes emerged:

1. *The lack of employment opportunities for people with mental illness* and the importance of employment in the recovery process. Positive comments were made about ‘Nexus’ whose mission is to assist people with a mental illness to gain employment (find out more: [www.nexushumanservices.com.au](http://www.nexushumanservices.com.au)).

2. *The need for more supported accommodation options* for people with a mental illness. Supports for independent living are currently being provided by mental health Carers. Both the Queanbeyan Home model and the Community Living Project model were mentioned as worthy of further investigation.
3. Some mental health Carers are *struggling to fund the costs of ongoing medications and specialist fees*. This requires ongoing employment or substantial superannuation on the part of Carers.
4. *A superannuation type scheme for Carers is needed*, especially for those unable to work due to their caring role. Carers Australia recently advocated for this in its 2010–2011 Budget submission.
5. *More flexible working arrangements are required* for employed mental health Carers as their caring role can quickly use up personal and annual leave. Carers Australia has advocated strongly for government policies to consider these.
6. *Difficulties in determining Carers’ eligibility for Centrelink benefits* was another theme. Specific examples were given by mental health Carers highlighting their personal frustrations and hardships with this. Ms Brodtmann advised that the electorate offices generally employ staff with knowledge of the Centrelink payments system, so being in touch with your local Member may help with such matters.

Carers ACT would like to thank Ms Brodtmann as well as the Carers for attending what was a very successful and informative luncheon.



# 2011 ANNUAL CLIENT SURVEY



**We are pleased to announce that 86% of Carers who responded to our 2011 Annual Client Survey were satisfied with the quality of Carers ACT's services.**

This exceeded the goal of 80% set out in the 2008–2011 Strategic Plan and it has been pleasing to be able to report this result to our funding bodies.

The majority of Carers who responded to the survey described our staff and organisation as understanding, compassionate and focused on meeting their needs. Comments in relation to our counselling service were particularly positive, acknowledging the role that counselling can play in assisting Carers to learn coping skills that result in a better quality of life.

In addition to the many positive comments we also received constructive feedback about instances when Carers were not totally satisfied with the service they had received. For example, some Carers noted that sometimes staff seemed rushed when responding to phone calls. All comments are taken on board and strategies are being developed to address them.

We would like to extend our thanks to each of the 349 Carers who took the time to respond to the survey, which is one of the most important tools we have to evaluate and improve our services.

If you would like to find out more about the survey results, the final report is now available from our website under Publications at [www.carersact.asn.au](http://www.carersact.asn.au)



CALD computer members receiving certificates



Italian group enjoying their day



Members of Indian group enjoying the day's festivities

# CALD WINTER CELEBRATION 2011

Nearly 100 Carers attended this year's CALD Winter Celebration and enjoyed each other's company, plenty of excellent food and some fantastic entertainment.

Held in the spacious auditorium at our new Holt office, it was great to see Carers from more than ten CALD groups join in the festivities. People were so keen to enjoy the fun that some turned up an hour and a half early! Luckily our Carers Hub provided the perfect place for these early birds to wait and relax before the main festivities began.

After a welcome from our CEO, Dee McGrath, the program began with some warm-up games and the awarding of certificates to those who recently completed the CALD program's Advanced Computer course. Following was a wonderful dance performance by our Spanish CALD group who performed the Pasodoble and Sevillana dances – undoubtedly one of the day's many highlights. All were impressed by the

performance and it was inspiring to see that dancing has no age limit – one of the dancers is an impressive 83 years old. During lunch, Minh Ha showed off his musical talents by entertaining us with his acoustic guitar, harmonica and didgeridoo.

Following a slideshow of photos from our past CALD events, we ended the day with a lucky draw. Feedback from the CALD Carers was greatly appreciative and they are already looking forward to the next celebration on December 1.



Vietnamese group enjoying the fantastic music and food



16–22 October 2011

# CARERS WEEK

**ANYONE, ANYTIME  
CAN BE A CARER**

## CARERS ACT SPECIAL EVENTS

TO CELEBRATE CARERS WEEK, WE ARE PUTTING ON TWO SPECIAL EVENTS - WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

### **Carers Week Luncheon**

Come and meet other Carers and enjoy some fun, festivities and of course, plenty of fine food.

**Date:** Wednesday 19 October

**Time:** 11:30am - 2:30pm

**Location:** Carers ACT Auditorium,  
80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt

### **Fred Williams - Infinite Horizons Exhibition**

Compliments of the National Gallery of Australia, enjoy a private guided tour of Infinite Horizons, an exhibition by Fred Williams, one of Australia's greatest painters.

**Date:** Thursday 20 October

**Time:** 10.30am - 12:30pm (Meet in the foyer at 10:20am)

**Location:** National Gallery of Australia, Parkes Pl, Parkes

Bookings are essential for both events. To RSVP or to find out more, please contact Eleanor on 6296 9908 or at [eleanork@carersact.asn.au](mailto:eleanork@carersact.asn.au)

# Dear Diary

## September, October and November

Bookings are required for the following activities. To RSVP or to find out more, please contact Eleanor on 6296 9908 or by email at [eleanork@carersact.asn.au](mailto:eleanork@carersact.asn.au)

### Carers Craft Group

Members work on their own craft items, group projects and learn new skills in a friendly environment. Come and enjoy a chat, some craft and morning tea.

#### Dates

Thursday 22 September – Surprise craft

Thursday 27 October – Work on your own project

Thursday 24 November – Christmas craft

**Time:** Sessions are from 9:30am – 12:30pm

**Location:** Carers Hub, Carers ACT, 80 Beaufort Cres, Holt

### Art Appreciation Group

Meets at The National Gallery of Australia to view and learn about the various exhibitions. Carers can enjoy a coffee afterwards in the Gallery Café.

#### Dates

Tuesday 20 September

Tuesday 18 October

Tuesday 15 November

**Time:** 10:15am (Meet outside the new main entrance at 10:00am)

**Location:** The National Gallery of Australia, Parkes Pl, Parkes

### Spring Seasonal Lunch

Enjoy lunch and good company with other Carers and celebrate the fact that spring has sprung.

**Dates:** Wednesday 14 September

**Time:** 12:00pm – 2.00pm

**Location:** Carers Hub, Carers ACT, 80 Beaufort Cres, Holt

### Carers Coffee Club

Come and join us for morning tea and a chat with other Carers.

#### Dates

Tuesday 13 September

Tuesday 11 and Tuesday 25 October

Tuesday 8 and Tuesday 22 November

**Time:** 10:00am – 12:00pm.

**Location:** Carers Hub, Carers ACT, 80 Beaufort Cres, Holt

### Day Trip to Tulip Top Gardens

Come and join us for a day at the lovely Tulip Top Gardens just 20 minutes from Canberra. Lunch, entry fee and transport all provided.

**Date:** Tuesday 27 September 2011

**Time:** 9.30am – 2.45pm

**Meet:** Chartered bus departs from Carers ACT Office at 9:45am, 80 Beaufort Cres, Holt (free all day parking at Holt)

### Fred Williams – Infinite Horizons Exhibition

Compliments of the National Gallery of Australia, enjoy a private guided tour of Infinite Horizons, an exhibition by Fred Williams, one of Australia's greatest painters.

**Date:** Thursday 20 October

**Time:** 10.30am – 12:30pm (Meet in the foyer at 10:20am)

**Location:** National Gallery of Australia, Parkes Pl, Parkes

## On Course for Carers

On Course for Carers monthly education sessions support Carers in their caring role.

### Making a Life Book (Communication Book)

This personalised document holds current, vital information about a person's background, present situation and hopes for the future. Learn how to make your own Life Book with Annette from CIT 'Skills for Carers'.

**Date:** Thursday 15 September

### Asthma

The Asthma Foundation ACT will provide information about asthma including symptoms, triggers, COPD and asthma first aid.

**Date:** Tuesday 25th October

### Sleep

A clinical psychologist will share strategies to manage insomnia and promote healthy restful sleep.

**Date:** Thursday 17 November

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**Time:** All On Course for Carers sessions run from 10:00am – 12:00pm with morning tea provided at 11:00am.  
**Location:** Carers Hub, Carers ACT, 80 Beaufort Cres, Holt

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For suggestions on future topics, please email Marie at [marief@carersact.asn.au](mailto:marief@carersact.asn.au)



# CALD Diary

## September, October and November

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) program provides CALD Carers with regular opportunities to mix with other Carers and to learn about important issues and how to access support services. To find out more, please contact our CALD Coordinator, Anndey, on 6296 9900 or by email at [anndeyh@carersact.asn.au](mailto:anndeyh@carersact.asn.au)

### Chinese

#### Dates

Wednesday 14 September – Continenence  
Wednesday 5 October – To be announced  
Wednesday 2 November – Managing the Stress of Caring  
**Time:** 10:00am – 12:00pm  
**Location:** Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre, North Building, London Cct, Civic

### Indian

#### Dates

Saturday 10 September – Public Trustee  
(Will and nursing home preparations)  
Saturday 8 October – Tai Chi  
Saturday 12 November – To be announced  
**Time:** 11:00am – 1:00pm  
**Location:** Belconnen Library, 12 Chandler St, Belconnen

### Greek

#### Dates

Thursday 8 September – Foot Care  
Thursday 13 October – Tai Chi  
Thursday 10 November – Stress Management  
**Time:** 10:30am – 12:30pm  
**Location:** Hellenic Club, Matilda St, Woden

### Italian

#### Dates

Friday 2 September – Tai Chi  
Friday 7 October – Communication Book  
Friday 4 November – Meditation  
**Time:** 10:30am – 12:30pm  
**Location:** Italo Australian Club, 78 Franklin St, Forrest

### Hungarian

#### Dates

Wednesday 7 September – Managing the Stress of Caring  
Wednesday 5 October – Foot Care  
Wednesday 2 November – To be announced  
**Time:** 11:30am – 1:00pm  
**Location:** Braddon Bowling Club, Elder St, Braddon

### CALD SUMMER CELEBRATION

This year our CALD Summer Celebration will take place on Thursday 1 December and as always will provide Carers with a wonderful opportunity to meet up and celebrate each other's efforts in a relaxed and fun setting. Further details will be available in the near future.

### Polish

#### Dates

Wednesday 7 September – To be announced  
Wednesday 5 October – Arthritis  
Wednesday 2 November – To be announced  
**Time:** 11:00am – 1:00pm  
**Location:** Catholic Centre, 211 Goyder St, Narrabundah

### Spanish

#### Dates

Monday 12 September – Continenence  
Monday 17 October – Picnic Day  
Monday 14 November – To be announced  
**Time:** 11:00am – 1:00pm  
**Location:** Canberra Labor Club, Chandler St, Belconnen

### Tongan and Samoan (combined)

#### Dates

Friday 30 September – Diabetes  
Friday 28 October – Managing the Stress of Caring  
Friday 25 November – To be announced  
**Time:** 12:00pm – 2:00pm  
**Location:** Carers Hub, Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Cres, Holt

### Tamil

#### Dates

Saturday 17 September – Managing the Stress of Caring  
Saturday 15 October – Continenence  
Saturday 19 November – To be announced  
**Time:** 11:00am – 1:00pm  
**Location:** Tamil Aged Care Residential Home, 11 Bromby St, Isaacs

### Vietnamese

#### Dates

Tuesday 6 September – Medication  
Tuesday 4 October – Continenence  
Tuesday 1 November – Tai Chi  
**Time:** 10:00am – 12:00pm  
**Location:** Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre, North Building, London Cct, Civic

### Japanese

Please contact Anndey for details on upcoming events.

# SUPPORT GROUPS

Carers ACT's support groups offer Carers the chance to share experiences with each other over a cup of tea in a friendly and relaxed setting.

## Northside Carer Support Group

**Dates:** September 7, October 5 and November 2 (Wednesdays)

**Time:** 10.00am – 12.00pm

**Location:** Carers Hub, Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Cres, Holt

## Southside Carer Support Group

**Dates:** 13 September, 11 October, 8 November (Tuesdays)

**Time:** 10.30am – 12.00pm

**Location:** New! Woden Smith Family, Corner of Launceston and Easty Sts, Phillip

## Mental Health Carers Support Group

**Dates:** September 28, October 26 and November 23 (Wednesdays)

**Time:** 6.00pm – 8.00pm

**Location:** Woden Smith Family, Corner of Launceston and Easty Sts, Phillip

## Support Group for Parents of School Aged Children with a Disability (Staying Afloat)

**Dates:** September 8 and November 10 (Thursdays)

**Time:** New! 10.00am – 11.30am

**Location:** Carers Hub, Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Cres, Holt

## Young Carers Support Group

Boys and Girls aged 7 – 11

**Dates:** September 6 and November 1 (Tuesdays)

**Time:** 4.00pm – 5.00pm

**Location:** Carers Hub, Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Cres, Holt

## Young Carers Support Group

Girls aged 12 – 16

**Dates:** September 21, October 19 and November 16 (Wednesdays)

**Time:** 4.00pm – 5.15pm

**Location:** Carers Hub, Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Cres, Holt

For more information about any of the above groups, please contact Eleanor on 6296 9908 or at [eleanork@carersact.asn.au](mailto:eleanork@carersact.asn.au)

## Mature Carers Support Group

Carers aged 55-years and over who have a daughter or son with a disability are invited to join this support group. Come along to listen to guest speakers, share your experiences and enjoy a cup of tea.

Carers in the program will be contacted prior to each meeting, if you wish to join or would like more information, please contact Elaine on 6296 9924 or by email at [elaines@carersact.asn.au](mailto:elaines@carersact.asn.au)

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## COUNSELLING SUPPORT

- Make sense of your experiences as a Carer.
- Work out your own needs and solve problems.
- Manage conflict, stress and other emotional factors that make caring more difficult.
- Build resilience and cope with change.
- Improve your mental, emotional and physical wellbeing.
- Deal with overwhelming and confusing feelings.

## Counselling is available in both our Holt and Woden Offices.

Appointments are essential. To make one please call the Carer Advisory Service on 1800 242 636.



# BETTER START FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY

The new early intervention program **Better Start for Children with Disability** commenced on 1 July 2011.

Better Start provides funding of up to \$12,000 for early intervention services. To access Better Start, children with an eligible diagnosis must register before they turn 6-years of age and families will then have until the child turns seven to access funding.

**Children are eligible for Better Start if diagnosed with one of the following disabilities:**

- 👏 Cerebral palsy
- 👏 Deafblindness
- 👏 Down syndrome, including mosaic Down syndrome
- 👏 Fragile X syndrome with full mutation
- 👏 Hearing impairment
- 👏 Vision impairment

📞 To find out more about Better Start or to register your child, please visit [betterstart.net.au](http://betterstart.net.au) or phone **1800 242 636**

The thresholds that apply to these disabilities have been determined by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs in conjunction with advice provided by an Expert Reference Group.

**To register a child for the early intervention funding a parent or Carer must provide evidence of:**

- 👏 The child's age – birth certificate or passport
- 👏 Written confirmation of diagnosis (for sight and hearing impairments, confirmation of a moderate or greater impairment is required)
- 👏 Proof of residential address – e.g. recent gas or electricity bill
- 👏 Residential status – e.g. permanent residency (if applicable)
- 👏 The child's Centrelink Customer Reference Number (CRN)

## CARERS ACT MEMBERSHIP

In July we completed our 2-yearly membership renewal process and all Members should have now received their new membership card, valid until June 2013. If you are a Member and did not receive the card, please contact us by email at [membership@carersact.asn.au](mailto:membership@carersact.asn.au) or call 6296 9900.

We are pleased to announce two new benefits for Members who are current Carers. Questacon and Limelight Cinemas have kindly offered to provide free entry to Carers who are accompanying their cared for person. Carers must show their Carers ACT membership card.

To find out more about Carers ACT membership and how you can help our mission to support family Carers in the ACT, please visit [About/Membership](http://About/Membership) on our website [www.carersact.asn.au](http://www.carersact.asn.au)



**Carers ACT**

- Information and service referral
- Professional and confidential counselling
- Individualised and tailored respite
- Social and support groups
- Education and training

**Freecall 1800 242 636**

Holt | Woden | Deakin | Fraser

### Supporting Family Carers



## NDIS a Step Closer

**Australia has moved closer to a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) following the release of the Productivity Commission's *Disability Care and Support* final report on 10 August.**

The report has been welcomed by both sides of Government as an important step towards providing better support for Australians with disability, their Carers and families.

The Commission's key recommendations are that the Government fully funds a NDIS scheme that covers all Australians and creates a National Injury Insurance Scheme to cover people who require lifetime support due to a 'catastrophic injury.'

The Government has allocated \$10 million for immediate start-up work on the NDIS and will establish a COAG ministerial council to lead the reform.

Carers Australia President, Tim Moore, welcomed the news. "With these developments there is now great hope in the community that Australia will at last introduce a scheme that will provide quality care and support to all people with a significant disability," he said.

### Productivity Commission's Main Recommendations

♿ The creation of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), funded from consolidated revenue, which will provide all Australians with insurance for the costs of support if they or a family member acquire a disability. The Commission recommends that the scheme be introduced in a few regions from mid-2014, and cover the country by 2018–2019.

♿ The creation of a National Injury Insurance Scheme (NIIS) to provide no fault insurance for anyone who suffers a catastrophic injury. The NIIS will draw on the best schemes currently operating around Australia. State and territory governments would be the major driver, developing a comprehensive scheme by 2015.

### The NDIS will comprise three tiers:

- ♿ Tier 1 will cover everyone, as it will provide insurance against the costs of support in the event that an individual or a family member acquires a significant disability.
- ♿♿ Tier 2 is for people with, or affected by, a disability. Anyone in this situation could approach the scheme for information and referral services (as distinct from funded support).
- ♿♿♿ Tier 3 will provide quality care and support to all people with a significant disability; estimated to be approximately 410,000. A person funded under Tier 3 would have a disability that is, or is likely to be permanent.

'Permanent' refers to the irreversible nature of the disability, even though this may be of a chronic, episodic nature. In an important change from the approach proposed in the draft report, the final report has recommended that people with a psychosocial disability be included in the Scheme. Eligibility for the NDIS will be determined by functional limitations, not conditions.

A link to the *Disability Care and Support* report and a copy of the Carers Australia media release can be found on our website at [www.carersact.asn.au](http://www.carersact.asn.au)

## Transition Plan 2011 – 2012

Due to current aged care and disability health reforms, the introduction of new Carers ACT programs and Commonwealth quality reviews for five of our existing programs, we have extended our current strategic plan period until June 2012.

Meanwhile, we have developed a 1-year Transition Plan to see us through the next 12 months. By the end of this period we expect the extent of the new reforms will become much clearer. The input from our recent strategic planning workshop will be used to develop a Strategic Plan for 2012–2015 in the coming months. However some of the more pressing priorities identified in the planning workshop have been addressed in the current Transition Plan.

### These include:

- Retaining and improving our solutions focused and holistic support response to Carers;
- Better promoting our services to Carers;
- Working in collaboration with other service agencies to encourage referrals of Carers to complementary supports; and
- Creating more opportunities for Carer input to systemic advocacy.

Our annual report for 2010–2011 will be available on our website in November. It will report to Carers ACT Members and funding bodies on what we have delivered against our program contracts in supporting a diverse range of Carers and their families and how we have continued to improve as an organisation.

## Carers ACT 2011 Annual General Meeting

**Date:** Friday 18 November

**Time:** 12:00pm – 12:30pm followed by a light lunch

**Venue:** Carers ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt

**RSVP:** Karen Gosper 6296 9933 or [kareng@carersact.asn.au](mailto:kareng@carersact.asn.au)

For further information please visit [www.carersact.asn.au](http://www.carersact.asn.au)

# Floriade

## A Feast for the Senses

With winter now behind us it's time to put the woollies away and head to Commonwealth Park to celebrate spring's arrival at Canberra's fabulous month-long Floriade festival beginning 17 September.

'A Feast for the Senses' is the theme and with music, food and entertainment from around the world, and more than a million blooming flowers providing a stunning backdrop, it promises to deliver.

This year's celebration sees fresh delights as well as plenty of old favourites. New events include 'Carnival in the Park' featuring two days of Latino music, the 'From the Pantry Marquee' which will showcase epicurean delights from around the world and include food and beverage demonstrations, and the 'Storm of the Senses' digital light display.

Floriade is well designed for those with mobility issues with disabled parking, wide pathways and minimal stairs – also scooters and wheelchairs are available for hire. So come on Carers, shake off the last of the winter lethargy and take your loved ones down to Commonwealth Park – we will see you there!

To find out more, please visit [www.floriadeaustralia.com](http://www.floriadeaustralia.com)

## SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYED CARERS



### Are you working and caring for a parent who is frail aged or has dementia?

Trying to juggle work and caring can often be difficult and stressful and may mean that you do not have enough time and energy to meet your own needs. Sometimes you might have to attend a meeting at the same time that you need to take mum or dad to a medical appointment. Or perhaps you are required to travel for work but there is no-one else to check on mum or dad while you are away.

The Employed Carers Program is funded by the Department of Health and Ageing and supports Carers who need extra services or supports to enable them to continue to work. The program aims to assist Carers in the workforce by providing support to care recipients over 65 years of age who are frail aged or who have dementia. Carers ACT provides Carers with information on available aged care services and links them into

ongoing supports such as domestic or shopping assistance and day-care programs for the parent.

#### Other supports include:

- Short term or emergency respite.
- Meditrak devices for people with dementia who may be at risk of wandering.
- Personal alarms for frail aged people who may be at risk of falls.

The Program's flexibility enables us to help meet the different needs and workplace commitments of the individual Carer and their families. We aim to give Carers peace of mind so that they can maintain healthy and happy caring relationships and workplaces.

If you are working and caring for someone who is frail aged or has dementia let us support you.

To find out more, please contact **1800 200 422** or by email at [employedcarer@carersact.asn.au](mailto:employedcarer@carersact.asn.au)

# Info Gems

Have you or someone you care for had a medication review lately?

**If you take a number of different medicines, it's worth asking your pharmacist or GP about a Home Medicines Review.**

## **What are Home Medicines Reviews?**

A Home Medicines Review is a way for your Pharmacist and GP to help you manage your medicines at home. Your GP gives you a referral to the community pharmacy of your choice. The pharmacist then talks with you, preferably in your home, and makes a written report back to the GP, who discusses the recommendations with you.

## **Why are they a good idea?**

If Medicines are not used properly, or if the wrong ones are used together, the results can be serious. More than 140,000 Australians have to go to hospital each year with problems caused by their medication. It has been shown that in up to 69% of these cases, the problem could have been avoided. Older people, because they often take a number of different medicines, are particularly at risk.

## **Who needs one?**

**Can you, or someone you know answer 'yes' to any of these questions?**

1. Do you take more than five medicines a day?
2. Are you confused or worried about your medicines?
3. Do you see more than one GP or specialist?
4. Have you recently spent time in hospital?

If so, it might be a good idea to ask your pharmacist or GP about a Home Medicines Review.

## **How do they help?**

Many people have already been helped by Home Medicines Reviews.

## **This can be as simple as the pharmacist:**

- Showing you how to take medicines correctly;
- Explaining why and when you should take them;
- Explaining where medicines should be stored;
- Checking that your prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines and vitamins are appropriate to take together;
- Checking that any medical equipment or devices you use are in working order; and
- Checking that you are using the correct techniques when using medical equipment or devices.

As a result of a Home Medicines Review, people say they understand more about managing their condition and more about their medication. They also know when they actually need to see their GP and are often able to reduce their visits.

A Home Medicines Review is nothing to worry about. The Home Medicines Review is not a way of 'checking up on you' or talking to the GP behind your back. A Home Medicines Review cannot be done without your consent and you choose the pharmacy. It is a good way to improve your relationship with your GP, because they can get the full picture on the medicines you're using – both prescription and non-prescription.

## **What does it cost?**

The pharmacist fee is paid for by the government and if your GP bulk bills (and for Home Medicines Reviews, most do) it will not cost you a cent. If you do need to pay your GP, you can claim most of the money back through Medicare, so you will be out of pocket by less than \$20.

## **More information**

To find out more about Home Medicines Reviews, just talk to your pharmacist or GP.

"As a result of a Home Medicines Review, people say they understand more about managing their condition and more about their medication."



## Office locations

### Carers ACT Northside

(Main Office)  
80 Beaufort Crs, Holt  
Ph (02) 6296 9900  
Fax (02) 6296 9999

### The Cottage

Dementia Respite – Low Care  
117 Denison St, Deakin  
Ph (02) 6285 2082  
Fax (02) 6282 5784

### Fraser House

Disability Respite for  
Mature Carers  
30a Kerrigan St, Fraser  
Ph (02) 6259 9555  
Fax (02) 6259 9333

### Carer Advisory Service

For information, referral, advocacy, problem solving,  
developing options, counselling appointments and workshops.  
1800 242 636

### Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre

For information on community aged care and disability  
services in your area and all respite enquiries.  
1800 052 222

[www.carersact.asn.au](http://www.carersact.asn.au)

If undelivered please return to:

Carers ACT Inc.  
80 Beaufort Crescent  
Holt ACT 2615

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