

THE Carers circle



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF CARERS ACT • SUMMER EDITION – DECEMBER 2010



Supporting Family Carers

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DEAR CARERS

Welcome to the final edition of Carers Circle for 2010.

As we wrap up another year there are a number of initiatives that will be of particular interest to family Carers. The new National Carer Legislation is a breakthrough in Australia and formally recognises the contribution of family Carers.

The Commonwealth Government is now developing a National Carers Strategy and is consulting with Carers across the nation in a series of workshops. Carers Australia in partnership with Carers ACT hosted one of the first workshops on 29th October – read the summary of recommendations from Carers on our website.

A new Access Economics Report, commissioned by Carers Australia, has found that the replacement cost of the care provided by Australia's 2.9million Carers is a staggering \$40.9 billion per annum. This represents 3.2% of GDP and 60% of other formal health care.

The ACT Government has released a discussion paper on a proposed ACT Carers Charter and has extended the definition of Carer to include Foster and Kinship Carers as well as Grandparents. We'd love to hear your views on this and the principles as stated in the discussion paper – juliap@carersact.asn.au. See page 11 for more information and how to make your own submission to the ACT Government.

On page 13 we outline the key issues and needs of all caring families we will be raising in our submission to inform the ACT Budget 2010-11.

This season's feature story of Fiona May and her family beautifully illustrates the difference between being a parent and being a 'parent/Carer'. If you would like to share your story – please contact Wayne wayne@carersact.asn.au

On behalf of the Board and staff of Carers ACT, we hope you will have an opportunity to find some time for yourself to relax and rest and that you enjoy the festive season with your nearest and dearest.

Best regards.

Dee McGrath
CEO

As a Parent, As a Carer

My perspective on being a Carer by Fiona May

I AM A PARENT OF TRIPLETS, 2 girls and a boy. My son has High Functioning Autism.

Being a Carer is like being a parent but also so unlike it.

As a parent I strive to bring up my children with love, some level of consistency, to give them the building blocks to become the wonderful adults that they can be. As a Carer I strive still to do all that for a child who doesn't respond or understand in the same way and whose road to becoming that wonderful adult is much more difficult.

As a parent I want to prepare nutritious meals, as a Carer I can only use mince or chicken breast because Simon won't eat other meats. As a parent I think how nice it would be to participate in community events. As a Carer I make those plans to accommodate Simon's difficulty with crowds, his likelihood for running off, whether I have the support and the stamina I need to survive what could be a fun family outing or a stressful, traumatic day. Many times we just don't go instead.

As a parent I attend parent teacher interviews to share in my child's education. As a Carer I am constantly on call to rescue the school from disasters, which are sometimes of their own making; and attending tense meetings to ensure that my child is allowed to participate in activities other children access by right.

As a parent I chose to return to work part time so that I could be around my children during their early years. As a Carer I manage to work part time, in jobs rather than a career, so that I am available to my son's school, to attend the many meetings, the appointment with professionals, to make the endless phone calls, to source the help my son and my family need. And somewhere in there, to scratch out some sanity time for me.

As a parent I strive to be even handed in the expectations I have of my children to help out or to treat each other well. As a Carer I have to ask my girls to be way more adult in their roles and responses than they should have to be.



“ Being a Carer doesn't just affect the way I parent my children. It affects so many facets of my life. ”



Fiona May's Story continued...

“ As a Carer that inner lion has had to be even stronger and more determined to act for what is best for its brood. ”

As a multiple birth parent I became good at protecting privacy, projecting strength and multitasking. As a Carer that inner lion has had to be even stronger and more determined to act for what is best for its brood.

Being a Carer doesn't just affect the way I parent my children. It affects so many facets of my life, indeed I struggle to think of many facets that it doesn't affect. From my relationship with my husband, my role as a worker, who I socialise with, when and how I socialise, relax, exercise, attend to my own health needs, the causes I volunteer for, the kinds of holidays we plan; all of these are tempered or adjusted or compromised by being a Carer.

My dreams, my plans and hopes for the future, the perspective I have on the world around me, the way I respond to others, the way I think about myself, my expectations of myself and others, all of these things have been changed by my caring role.

Not all of those changes are for the worse. I am a more patient and tolerant person as a result. I am less quick to judge or assume the behaviour of others. I have learnt to project a stillness and calmness that is not always as real as it appears! And I have discovered the strength I need to overcome each hurdle, to fight for our needs, and sometimes just to survive each day.

My journey in faith over the past couple of years has contributed to that strength, as has the support I have received from other Carers and those who support us.

If I had to characterise Carers of children with disabilities I would say on the whole we are tough but fragile. Tough, because we have to fight for our, and our children's rights and needs. Fragile, because we get worn down by the never-ending nature of that fight and the work of raising a child with disabilities. There are times when cracks appear in the toughness, because both our children themselves and the system around us make that fight so hard.

To some parts of the fight there are no easy answers or alternatives. Life wasn't meant to be perfect. But the meaningless bureaucratic hurdles; the chronic shortage of respite options; the arbitrary rules of funding bodies that define service boundaries; the lack of access to professional and therapeutic help; the incapacity of our school system to support and educate our special children; these are fights we have because the system is flawed. Because the value of family Carers is not recognised; because the words early intervention and prevention are meaningless when talking about real support for families that struggle to avoid crisis; because there is insufficient political and moral will to really support families and children with disabilities.

Yes, it's true that recognition and support for family Carers has come a long way in the past decade or so. But for those living the experience of family caring, the changes aren't coming quickly or smoothly enough.

In my idealised world, families wouldn't have to fight to get the support they need. Services would be flexible and focus on the needs of the families and the children rather than being defined by funding bodies and bureaucratic systems.

In that world the people in my son's school would work with him and me to help him learn rather than expect him to conform to the group or merely baby-sit.

In that world I would still be tough, but perhaps less fragile. I would be less cynical about the capacity of the system to support us. I would have more energy to devote to helping Simon grow up because I wouldn't be spending it fighting a system. I would get regular, genuine breaks from my caring role to give me the stamina I need.

In that world my hopes and dreams for the future would still be tempered by the realities of autism, but would no longer be as bleak about the capacity of our society to nurture an autistic boy into a wonderful adult able to make his unique contribution to the world.

In that world, it would be Carers week, every week.



New Legislation Recognises Carers

THE NATIONAL CARER RECOGNITION BILL has now been passed through both houses of Parliament.


The Bill creates a *Statement for Australia's Carers* which includes ten key principles regarding Carers and how they should be treated by Commonwealth public service agencies and their funded providers. It is a significant first step in the journey to a society in which caring is a shared community responsibility where the people who take on Caring roles are given the respect and support they deserve. The new legislation will not establish Carers' rights or create legally enforceable obligations for Carers, public service care agencies or other service providers

"While the bill does not establish Carers' rights, it is a significant step forward in ensuring that Carers have the same opportunities to enjoy optimum health and well being and social and economic participation as do other Australians" said CEO Carers Australia, Joan Hughes.

This legislation along with the other parts of the National Carer Recognition framework such as the National Carer Strategy promises to increase awareness of the needs of Carers within government and the broader community and to improve the coordination of services for Carers across portfolios including primary health, mental health, disability, hospital and aged care systems.

The Statement for Australia's Carers

- 1 All Carers should have the same rights, choices and opportunities as other Australians, regardless of age, race, sex, disability, sexuality, religious or political beliefs, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage, cultural or linguistic differences, socioeconomic status or locality.**
- 2 Children and young people who are Carers should have the same rights as all children and young people and should be supported to reach their full potential.**
- 3 The valuable social and economic contribution that Carers make to society should be recognised and supported.**
- 4 Carers should be supported to enjoy optimum health and social wellbeing and to participate in family, social and community life.**
- 5 Carers should be acknowledged as individuals with their own needs within and beyond the caring role.**
- 6 The relationship between Carers and the persons for whom they care should be recognised and respected.**
- 7 Carers should be considered as partners with other care providers in the provision of care, acknowledging the unique knowledge and experience of Carers.**
- 8 Carers should be treated with dignity and respect.**
- 9 Carers should be supported to achieve greater economic wellbeing and sustainability and, where appropriate, should have opportunities to participate in employment and education.**
- 10. Support for Carers should be timely, responsive, appropriate and accessible.**



National Carers Strategy

THE DEPARTMENT OF FAMILIES, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has commissioned Carers Australia to conduct 15 Carer consultation sessions around the country about the proposed National Carers Strategy. The Strategy is intended to guide federal policy development and service delivery.

One of the first of these consultations was held in the ACT on 29th October. Seventeen Carers across the spectrum of care needs participated in a workshop and provided practical suggestions on how the Strategy could be developed to make a meaningful difference to Carers and their families.

If you would like to have your say on the National Carer Strategy, a copy of the discussion paper – *Towards a National Carer Strategy*, including information on how to make a submission can be obtained by visiting

www.health.gov.au/nationalcarerstrategy. Comments on the discussion paper are due by 5 December 2010 and can be emailed to nationalcarerstrategy@health.gov.au

\$40.9 billion annual replacement of informal care – Carers Australia research.

The replacement cost of the care provided by Australia's 2.9 million Carers is a staggering \$40.9 billion, amounting to 3.2% of GDP and 60% of other formal health care. Read the Access Economics research commissioned by Carers Australia on www.carersact.asn.au/publications



Calendar of Activities



WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 1, 2010
10:00AM – 12:00PM
Northside Carer Support Group

THURSDAY DECEMBER 2, 2010 10:00AM – 11:30AM
Carers Self-Guided Meditation Group

TUESDAY DECEMBER 7, 2010 4:00PM – 5:00PM
Young Carers Support Group

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 8, 2010
Summer/ Christmas Seasonal Lunch

THURSDAY DECEMBER 9, 2010 11:00AM – 12:30PM
Parents of School Aged Children with a Disabilities Support Group

TUESDAY DECEMBER 14, 2010 10:00AM
Art Appreciation Group

TUESDAY DECEMBER 14, 2010 10:30AM – 12:00PM
Southside Carer Support Group

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 15, 2010 4:00PM – 5:15PM
Young Carers – Girls Support Group



THURSDAY JANUARY 13, 2011
11:00AM – 12:30PM
Parents of School Aged Children with a Disabilities Support Group

TUESDAY JANUARY 18, 2011 10:00AM
Art Appreciation Group

THURSDAY JANUARY 20, 2011 9:30AM
Carers Craft Group - Lantern Painting

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 22, 2011 11:00AM
Male Carer Support Group

TUESDAY JANUARY 25, 2011 11:00AM
Male Carer Support Group

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 26, 2011 6:00PM – 8:00PM
Mental Health Carers Support Group



TUESDAY FEBRUARY 1, 2011
4:00PM – 5:00PM
Young Carers Support Group

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 2, 2011 10:00AM – 12:00PM
Northside Carer Support Group

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 8, 2011 10:30AM – 12:00PM
Southside Carer Support Group

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 15, 2011 10:00AM
Art Appreciation Group

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 16, 2011 4:00PM – 5:15PM
Young Carers – Girls Support Group

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 17, 2011 9:30AM
Carers Craft Group - Work on your own project

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 19, 2011
Carer Support Services

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 22, 2011 11:00AM
Male Carer Support Group

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 23, 2011 6:00PM – 8:00PM –
Mental Health Carers Support Group

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 23, 2011
ON COURSE FOR CARERS
CENTRELINK with Karl, FISS
Accessing CARER PAYMENT, CARER ALLOWANCE
and CARER PAYMENT CHILD

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 25, 2011 10:00AM – 3:00PM
Day trip to the Royal Canberra Show



TUESDAY MARCH 1, 2011
4:00PM – 5:00PM
Young Carers Support Group

WEDNESDAY MARCH 2, 2011 10:00AM – 12:00PM
Northside Carer Support Group

TUESDAY MARCH 8, 2011 10:30 – 12:00PM
Southside Carer Support Group

THURSDAY MARCH 10, 2011 11:00AM – 12:30PM
Parents of School Aged Children with a Disabilities Support Group

TUESDAY MARCH 15, 2011 10:00AM
Art Appreciation Group

WEDNESDAY MARCH 16, 2011 12:00 – 2:00PM
Autumn Seasonal Lunch

WEDNESDAY MARCH 16, 2011 4:00PM – 5:15PM
Young Carers – Girls Support Group

THURSDAY MARCH 17, 2011 9:30AM
Carers Craft Group – Silk scarf dying

SATURDAY MARCH 19, 2011 10:00AM
Carer Respite Services – Holt Morning Tea

TUESDAY MARCH 22, 2011 11:00AM
Male Carer Support Group

WEDNESDAY MARCH 23, 2011
6:00PM – 8:00PM
Mental Health Carers Support Group



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.

WHEN: the 4th Thursday of the month
December – no group

9:30am Thursday 20th January – Lantern painting
9:30am Thursday 17th February – Work on your own project
9:30am Thursday 17th March – Silk scarf dying

WHERE: Carers Hub, 80 Beaurepaire Cres Holt

CONTACT: Lucinda on **6296 9900** or
lucindar@carersact.asn.au

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

WHEN: the 3rd Tuesday of the month
10am Tuesday 14th December (note 2nd week of Dec.)
10am Tuesday 18th January
10am Tuesday 15th February
10am Tuesday 15th March

WHERE: Meet outside the entrance of the National Gallery of Australia, Parkes Place ACT at 9:50am

CONTACT: Call Lucinda on **6296 9900** or
lucindar@carersact.asn.au to register
as numbers are limited

DAY TRIP TO THE ROYAL CANBERRA SHOW

Come and join us for a day at the Royal Canberra Show. Entry fee, morning tea and transport all provided.

WHEN: Friday 25th February 2011 ~ 10:00am–3:00pm
DEPART: Bus departs from Carers ACT 80 Beaurepaire Cres. Holt (free all day parking available at Holt)
FREE: Free to family Carers. Bookings are essential
CONTACT: by calling CACT Reception on **6296 9900** or
lucindar@carersact.asn.au

AUTUMN SEASONAL LUNCH

Enjoy lunch with other Carers and a warm welcome to Autumn.

WHEN: Wednesday 16th March 12–2.00pm
WHERE: Carers Hub Carers ACT 80 Beaurepaire Cres Holt
BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL: please RSVP by Wednesday 9th March by calling CACT Reception on **6296 9900** or
lucindar@carersact.asn.au

NEW COURSE - TRANSITION

A new 4 week Course for Adult Carers after the death or permanent placement of the person they care for. Topics covered will include

- Living with grief
- Managing change
- Supporting each other
- Filling the space

Once a group has formed its members will decide on session times and on topics for discussion. Please phone Marie on **6296 9928** to express your interest or email **marief@carersact.asn.au**

Carers Family Christmas Party

SATURDAY 18TH DECEMBER 2.00pm – 4.00pm

CARERS ACT, 80 Beaurepaire Cres Holt

RSVP: Julia on 6296 9952 Email: juliap@Carersact.asn.au
with names and ages of children attending.

Gifts will be provided by the generosity of the ABC Giving Tree

You're Invited

Carer support groups

Carers ACT Support Groups provide a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for you to share your experiences with other Carers who may be in a similar situation as you. Call 6296 9900 for more information about these free groups.

NORTHSIDE CARER SUPPORT GROUP

WHEN: 10am–12noon. First Wednesday of each month.

No meeting in January

WHERE: Carers Hub Carers ACT

80 Beaufort Crescent Holt

FACILITATOR: Alison

SOUTHSIDE CARER SUPPORT GROUP

WHEN: 10.30am–12noon. Second Tuesday of each month.

No meeting in January

WHERE: Tuggeranong Community Centre

245 Cowlshaw St Tuggeranong

FACILITATOR: Lydia

MALE CARERS SUPPORT GROUP

WHEN: 11am. Fourth Tuesday of each month.

No meeting in December

WHERE: Canberra Southern Cross Yacht Club, Lounge,

Lotus Bay, Yarralumla

FACILITATOR: Lydia

PARENTS OF SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY

WHEN: 11am–12.30pm. Second Thursday of each month (during school term).

WHERE: Carers Hub Carers ACT

80 Beaufort Crescent Holt.

FACILITATOR: Lucinda

MATURE CARERS SUPPORT GROUP

Carers over 65 with a daughter or son with a disability are invited to join our support group.

WHEN: 10.00am–12.00pm.

Bi-monthly, please call for dates.

WHERE: Primal Balance Meeting Room, Torrens Shops.

No meeting in January

YOUNG CARERS (AGED 7–10) BOYS AND GIRLS

This group meets monthly to have fun and share experiences.

WHEN: 4–5pm. First Tuesday of each month.

No meeting in January

WHERE: Carers Hub Carers ACT

80 Beaufort Crescent Holt.

CONTACT: 6296 9938

YOUNG CARERS – GIRLS SUPPORT GROUP 12–15 YEARS

The girls meet monthly to do a range of activities depending on their interests.

WHEN: 4–5.15pm. Third Wednesday of each month.

No meeting in January

WHERE: Carers Hub Carers ACT 80 Beaufort Crescent

Holt. (Other locations at times to be advised.)

CONTACT: 6296 9938

MENTAL HEALTH CARERS SUPPORT GROUP

This is a new support group for family members and friends caring for someone living with mental health issues.

WHEN: 6–8pm. Fourth Wednesday of each month

No meeting in December

WHERE: Woden Smith Family,

Cnr Launceston St & Easty St, Woden

CONTACT: Lydia on 6296 9900



2010 CARERS SURVEY

The ACT Community Living Project (CLP) is a community organisation of over 250 families seeking quality life choices for a family member with disability. CLP is collecting essential information through a new survey and would love to hear from you. Surveys can be downloaded from the CLP website

<http://communitylivingproject.org.au/> or completed on-line. For further information phone Alison McGregor on 0406 333904.



New functions operating in the Hub for Carers

WE HAVE TWO NEW FUNCTIONS FOR CARERS now operating in the Carers hub.

BOOK SWAP

THE BOOK SWAP books are in the small bookshelf in the Carers hub. Carers can borrow a book and take it home, pass it on, bring it back or replace it with one they no longer want.

MOVIE TIME

IF CARERS or their children want to watch a DVD in the Hub, they can choose from the list and see Lindy in reception to obtain the movie.

LIST OF AVAILABLE MOVIES:



MOVIE	RATING	MOVIE	RATING
THE LION THE WITCH & THE WARDROBE	G	MERLIN	PG
MYSTERY OF THE MAYA	G	HONEYMOON IN VEGAS	PG
LIZZIE MCGUIRE (WHEN MUM ATTACKS)	G	BATMAN	PG
CURIOUS GEORGE	G	HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS	PG
FERN GULLY	G	MAMMA MIA	PG
BINDI (KID FITNESS)	G	THE CIDER HOUSE RULES	M
PINGU (THE SUPER HERO)	G	THE IN-LAWS	M
PINGU (PINGU THE PAINTER)	G	THE DARJEELING LIMITED	M
SOOTY (THE BIG SURPRISE)	G	HAIR	M
LEONARD COHAN (LIVE IN CONCERT)	G	CADILLAC MAN	M
LIZZIE MCGUIRE (COME FLY WITH ME)	G	HARRY POTTER (AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX)	M
HI 5	G	I AM SAM	M
DADDY DAY CARE	G	LIFE AS A HOUSE	MA
OVER THE HEDGE	G	HE DIED WITH A FELAFEL IN HIS HAND	MA
ANDRE RIEU (LIVE IN SYDNEY)	PG	BIRTH	MA

New Advocacy Position

THE NEED for a specific Carer Advocacy Service was brought to the ACT Government's attention by Carers ACT in 2008, based on the results of a research project of more than 250 Carers in the ACT "*Carers – Having Their Say on the ACT's Future.*" Carers told us they needed help to find solutions for their problems including negotiation of sustainable services and support and guidance in navigating the current complex system, to enable them to better meet the challenges of caring at home.

Effective Carer advocacy will resolve issues before they escalate. The key outcomes that need to be achieved in a Carer Advocacy Service include:

- reduced Carer stress and time in navigating the complex service system and negotiating service support
- empowerment of Carers and families to self advocate and negotiate
- improve Carers own health and wellbeing by linking them into services that support them in their caring role

This new program will be run from Carers ACT shop front at the Woden Smith Family site from the end of January 2011.

ACT Carers Charter

Carers ACT has been lobbying the ACT Government for several years on the importance of developing an ACT Carers Charter which would ensure inclusion of Carers in decision-making and establish a core set of service delivery standards for agencies supporting Carers and the people they care for. The ACT Government released a discussion paper and proposed Charter on 21 October. The Charter provides a policy framework to guide the way ACT Government and government funded services that support Carers are accessed and delivered. The Consultations with Carers took place over 17-18 November.

Carers ACT raised its concerns with the ACT Government about the short timeframe between releasing the discussion paper and submission due dates. The Government has now agreed to extend submission dates until 30 January 2011. A copy of the Discussion Paper and proposed ACT Carers Charter can be accessed from our website at <http://www.carersact.asn.au/publications/act-Carerscharter-discussion-paper-2010/>

Have your say!

1. Tell us what you think about the proposed ACT Carers Charter and what difference you hope it will ultimately mean for you and your family. What do you think the impact might be if foster Carers, Kinship Carers and grandparents are included in the ACT definition of Carer and how will that impact on existing and future services? Email your thoughts to Juliap@carersact.asn.au – your input will inform Carers ACT's submission to the Minister.
2. Write your own submission to belinda.owen@act.gov.au. Alternatively, you can contact the independent consultants facilitating the process via louise.baldwin.gray@gmail.com

carers
voice

Officially Open for Business ~ Holt Open Day Celebrations

CARERS ACT'S NEW PREMISES was officially opened on Friday October 22, 2010. The opening commenced with a welcome by CEO Dee McGrath and was followed by the Welcome to Country by Auntie Ruth Bell and a speech from the original founding Carer of Carers ACT, Pauline Everson. The official opening was then completed by ACT Minister for Community Services, Joy Burch – who unveiled the plaque and cut the special cake.



NGA – Carers Week Celebrations

ON TUESDAY 19 OCTOBER,

95 Carers kicked off Carers Week celebrations with an event at the National Gallery of Australia.

THE EVENT included an informative lecture from Lucida Ward about music, artists and viewing of the new Turrell sculpture.

A BIG thank you to Marie, Anndey, Natasha, Jean, Val, Wayne and Bronwyn for helping on the day to ensure the Carers had a great time.

THANKS also to Adriane and the team at the National Gallery of Australia for making us feel so welcome and to Sean for the catering of a beautiful morning tea.





ACT Budget

The ACT Government has sought Carers ACT's views on the next ACT Budget. While the Government has stated it is committed to supporting the needs of a growing city, it has confirmed that it will be doing all it can to return the ACT Budget to surplus by 2013-14.

The 2011-12 Budget will therefore not be a high-spending one. Given this, Carers ACT is concentrating on putting forward a Submission highlighting a few key priority areas of need for Carers. These include additional appropriate and accessible after school care and holiday program care for children with disabilities, post-school options for young people with disabilities and increased supported accommodation for people with disabilities and mental illness.

The closing date for submissions is 17 December 2010. The Submission will be available on the Carers ACT website after 17 December.

Tell us what you think are the three priority areas for system reform that would better support you as a family Carer and the person/s you're caring for – email: juliap@carersact.asn.au by 10th December.

If you wish you develop your own submission, information on the process can be found on the budget consultation website at

www.treasury.act.gov.au/budgetconsultation.

Carers ACT Membership

WE ARE currently revising our categories of membership and expanding the range of benefits available to Carers.

Please advise us if you no longer wish to be a member of Carers ACT by emailing

juliap@carersact.asn.au or calling on **6296 9900**.



carers voice

“ This is an opportunity for you to shape and prioritise the policy changes needed for a better mental health system in the ACT...” ”

CARERS ACT has engaged an experienced and highly respected consultant, Simon Rosenberg, to independently review the MH Carer election process to ACT Committees that require Carer participation. He will compare current process to comparative organisations and suggest improvements to the process for future elections as well as provide recommendations on mechanisms for enhancing MH Carer engagement in the ACT.

In order for Carer Representatives and Carers ACT to represent the most pressing needs of concern of Carers caring for people with mental illness, we invite you to an important workshop on 9 December, from 5pm to 7:15pm at Carers ACT (80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt). This is an opportunity for you to shape and prioritise the policy changes needed for a better mental health system in the ACT in the coming 12 months. If you are caring for someone with

a mental illness and would like to have your voice heard, we encourage you to participate in our electronic survey or come along to our workshop

Working together to respond to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Long term Disability Care and Support Carers ACT is excited about the potential of a National Disability Insurance Scheme to properly support people with disabilities and their families and Carers. Carers ACT held a workshop on 25 November, comprising key disability service providers and other relevant stakeholders, to start the conversation in the ACT about the proposed NDIS and how the ACT community sector might respond to the Productivity Commission's Draft Report into Long-term Disability Care and Support – due in February 2011. John de la Bosca, National Campaign Director for NDIS provided an update on the national campaign.



People who care.... Moses Nyapidi

by Amanda Graham

MANY OF YOU may already be familiar with Moses through his role at The Cottage. Moses joined Carers ACT in February 2008 and brought with him a passion for people and a wealth of experience.

So what is it that prompts someone to dedicate their life to looking after the vulnerable people in their community? For Moses there was never any other option. Growing up in country Uganda in Africa the very strong values and belief that all people should work together to help the most vulnerable in their society were instilled in Moses from a very young age. As well as the community influence Moses' parents played a key role in his desire to help people. The son of the Chairman of the Ikateko clan (which means group of hardworking peasants) and with a mother who worked in the community as a traditional birth attendant, helping and supporting people within the community was a part of everyday life.

HIV and Aids are some of the largest issues facing the people of Africa so after studying his Bachelor of Social Work Moses began working for The Aids Support Organisation (TASO). Here Moses worked in Palliative and provided Home based care delivering medicines to people suffering from HIV or Aids as well as working on aids prevention programs in local communities.

In March 2007 Moses came to Australia as a skilled migrant with his brother and their nephew. "We came from a hardened country for a better life and education. "Upon arriving in Canberra Moses first considered working in the HIV area of the Hospitals, however he found that HIV and

Aids are not the greatest issues facing the people of Australia as they are in Africa. Keen to help where it was most needed Moses researched the issues facing Australian society and discovered that our Ageing population is the foremost concern. This prompted Moses to take up an apprenticeship and study for his Certificate III in Aged Care.

From February 2008 Moses worked at The Cottage as a Personal Care Coordinator. "I needed to be in a place where I could help people who would appreciate it." Initially working in the main facility after building up his skills in Dementia care Moses began the Early Onset Dementia Program using funding subsidised by Carers ACT as a pilot program to identify the need for this type of care to Government. This program involved working with younger people who were not suited to the existing Dementia Care services. Moses worked with these clients one on one from home or took them on outings to do every day activities appropriately suited to their personality and age.

After 2½ years at The Cottage Moses has recently moved to a role as Respite Coordinator, working on the Commonwealth Carelink and Respite Centre line. Moses is currently studying for his Diploma of Management in Community Services and his Masters of Community and Health Development Studies. Of his work for Carers ACT Moses says "Most importantly I am giving back to the community what I feel they should have."



Information Expo to Lift the Lid on Services

CARERS ACT'S A.C.T. RESPITE AND CARELINK CENTRE will be hosting an Information Expo for Carers at the Auditorium at our premises at 80 Beaurepaire Cres, Holt. This is your opportunity to see how the disability, aged and mental health service system works and what services are available to your family. Mark your diaries: **Thursday 24th February from 9:30am to 12:30pm.**

New Monthly Information sessions are happening at Holt on Saturday mornings 10am to 11am.

These information sessions are informal and will enable you to know our services, tour our premises and enjoy a complimentary morning tea.

Saturday 19th February Carer Support Services
Saturday 19th March Carer Respite Services

Open over Xmas Break except Public Holidays

CARERS ACT will be open as usual over the holiday season with the **exception of the public holidays**. Fraser House and The Cottage will be closed from 5pm 23rd December and reopening on 4th January 2011.

CLOSED 25th, 26th 27th and 28th December
OPERATING WITH SKELETON STAFF
29th, 30th and 31st December

CLOSED Monday 3rd January 2011

OPEN as per normal operation from Tuesday 4th January 2011

This newsletter is funded by



IF UNDELIVERED PLEASE RETURN TO:

Carers ACT Inc.
80 Beaurepaire Crescent
HOLT ACT 2615



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