

Carers Representation Program E Bulletin: 19 May 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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2011-2012 Federal Budget **Boost to mental health funding**

Mental health funding received a significant boost in the Federal Budget. The Government will be investing \$2.2 billion over five years in its National Mental Health Reform package. This package includes \$1.5 billion over five years in initiatives including:

- \$154m investment in the Personal Helpers and Mentors Scheme
- \$344m investment to deliver intensive services to people with severe and persistent mental health issues.
- \$491.7 million for a range of services to expand mental health services for teenagers and young adults including funding for an additional 30 Headspace centres and additional Early Psychosis Prevention and Intervention Centres (EPPIC) programs. Funding is also being provided for support services for families to enable them to get help for their children who are showing early signs of problems.
- \$2.4m over 5 years will be provided to employment services to better equip them to help people with mental illness into jobs.

Additionally the Government has announced that it will establish a Mental Health Commission, which will sit within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and have the independence of an Executive Agency. The Government will also develop a ten year Roadmap

for Reform of Mental Health in consultation with stakeholders and states and territories.

Mental health experts including Prof. John Mendoza, Prof. Patrick McGorry, Prof. Ian Hickie, and Monsignor David Cappo AO have welcomed the Government's investment in mental health. Prof. McGorry welcomed the budget and called on state Premiers and Chief Ministers to match Commonwealth funds.

Detailed information on the initiatives can be found at http://www.budget.gov.au/2011-12/content/glossy/health/html/health_overview_01.htm

Consultations on Carers' Experiences with ACT Mental Health

UltraFeedback is conducting a focus group on behalf of ACT Health on **Friday 20 May**, from 4pm-5.30pm at the Smith Family Building in Woden. The discussion will focus on your experiences with the ACT mental health system and hear your suggestions for improvements. Responses from the discussion will be de-identified and a consolidated report provided to the Department. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP Lydia at lydias@carersact.asn.au, or phone 6296 9900.

Feedback required
Mental Health Carers Representation Program
Sebastian Rosenberg's review of the Mental Health Carer Representation Program produced a number of recommendations about how the Program can be improved and grown.

The areas for improvement highlighted by Carers were the need:

1. for clearer and simpler processes to govern the appointment of Mental Health Carer Representatives
2. for better processes to support Mental Health Carers Representation Program members once they were appointed to committees
3. to enable Mental Health Carers Representation Program members to feel safe, in order to encourage their greater participation and to attract new members
4. for Carers ACT to more assertively manage the Mental Health Carers Representation Program, and to more confidently discharge the role of being the peak body for Mental Health Carers in the ACT.

A number of Mental Health Carers attended a workshop at the Smith Family Building in Woden last Thursday (12 May) to discuss these issues. Tina Bracher, Executive Director, Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services attended the first part of the meeting, speaking about the restructure of the new Division. She spoke about the implementation of a new governance framework to link with the new ACT Health level committees, noting that this will involve the establishment of a series of new Committees for Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services. New representation will be sought from consumer and carer groups through their peak bodies. Following Tina's departure, the group discussed the proposed new Representative selection process and the place of the Mental Health Carer Representation Program within broader mental health policy development. A write-up of the meeting is attached as part of the email. Also attached are a number of draft documents which detail a proposed new Committee Representative selection process.

Feedback on the draft documents is requested by Thursday 2 June. Comments can be directed to Sue Thomas at suet@carersact.asn.au or on 6296 9935 or to Lydia at lydias@carersact.asn.au or on 6296 9900. Please let us know if you would like a printed copy of the documents sent to you.

Values and Philosophy Workshop for AAMHIU Thursday 26 May

ACT Health – Mental Health is currently organising workshops with MH organisations, consumers and carers respectively to provide input into the vision and underpinning values, beliefs and philosophies for the new Adult Acute MH Inpatient Unit currently under construction at the Canberra Hospital.

A workshop for Mental Health Carers will be held on **Thursday 26 May** from 10am -12pm, at 2/80 Beaurepaire Crescent Holt.

“The workshop will cover an update on the progress of the new unit, but is primarily aimed at providing an opportunity for interested members of the mental health community to contribute to the development of a vision statement and the underpinning values, beliefs and philosophy of the new unit. By better understanding and incorporating the perspective of the community we can better create an outstanding new unit – we will also discuss the current PSU in terms of what it does well and areas for improvement”.

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The input gathered from these workshops will go into establishing a Values and Philosophy Statement for the AAMHIU.

Please RSVP to Julia at juliap@carersact.asn.au or on 6296 9952.

ACT Women's Return to Work Grants

The criteria for the ACT Women's Return to Work Grants have been expanded to include any women who have had caring responsibilities for 12 months or more that have impacted on their ability to work. The grants of \$1000 are available to women on low incomes who live in the ACT. Further eligibility information or

enquiries can be directed to the Women's Information and Referral Centre on 6205 2885. Application forms can be downloaded from the Women ACT website, www.women.act.gov.au.

The Women's Return to Work Grants Program is an ACT Government initiative funded through the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services and administered by the Women's Information and Referral Centre.

Contact Details:

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