

National Inquiry into Better Support for Carers Recommendations and Positive Steps in the Federal Budget

It's hard to believe a whole year has passed since the House of Representatives Family Committee launched the Inquiry into Better Support for Carers. Over 1300 submissions have formed the report *Who Cares? Inquiry into better support for Carers*, which includes a list of 50 recommendations.

One of the key recommendations, which the Australian Government included in the Federal Budget on May 12, is increasing the base rate of carer payments. Those receiving the Carer Payment at the single rate will receive an extra \$32.49 a week on the full rate of pension (\$10.14 a week more for couples). This will come into effect on September 20 this year.

The Government also announced an annual supplementary payment of \$600 to be paid to those receiving the Carer Payment and an additional \$600 per annum for Carer Allowance recipients, for each eligible person in their care. Carers receiving both the Carer Payment and Carer Allowance will receive at least two payments every year. This supplementary payment replaces the one-off bonuses.

Along with financial aid, the Committee recommended increased expenditure for community care services, in particular respite and domestic assistance. Carers ACT was disappointed that an increase in respite funding was not addressed in the Federal Budget and hope Governments will take this recommendation forward.



The Committee also suggested the need for services to become more streamlined and easier to navigate. The term "one stop shop" was used to describe the approach recommended to community care.

In the Federal Budget, the Government announced the introduction of a National Companion Card Scheme and a National Disability Parking Permit Scheme. These are due to be implemented by the end of 2010.

Other funding for people with a disability and their carers was outlined in the Budget, including \$9.3 million over four years for an additional 250 care places for teenagers with disability, and \$6.8 million for a pilot program trialling incentives to provide jobs to people with disability.

The House of Representatives Family Committee also recommended Centrelink establish a dedicated and specialised Carer/Disability Unit. A National Office for Carers within the Australian Government Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet has also been recommended.

Many of the recommendations address empowering carers to look after themselves, including through more counselling services and an extension of the preventative health care initiatives. Unfortunately the Budget did not address these recommendations this time.



Other key recommendations centred around recognition of carers, including a national education campaign to increase community awareness; making carers a priority group on the Government's social inclusion agenda; national recognition legislation; and a national carer plan.

Annette Ellis MP said "It is thanks to the generosity and candour of so many carers that the Committee has been able to gain a real insight into the day to day challenges that many carers face, and into what carers themselves believe is needed to best support them in their role."

"The real experiences as told to the Committee by carers themselves that have provided the direction for the report and its recommendations. It has been an absolute privilege that they have taken us into their lives in this way."

The report is a starting point. The next step is for the Government to show leadership and implement the measures as recommended.

The Carers from the ACT who contributed should feel proud that they are affecting change for themselves, and other Carers, in the way they are supported. We look forward to reporting more improvements in support for Carers, as a result of this inquiry, as they unfold.

If you would like to read the full report, visit our website www.carersact.asn.au and follow the link on the home page. Thank you to Carers NSW for sharing the content of this article.

From the CEO

Dear Member,

Carers ACT welcomes the report "Who Cares" – our front page story this quarter. We will be closely following the implementation of the report's 52 recommendations and will continue to keep you informed.

Carers NSW also released The Ethics of Caring in a Good Society: A National Conversation. The report evolved from a two year long national conversation about the nature of caring in our society. The matter put to participants was: Australia faces a crisis in caring. There are now many more people needing care and few unpaid family Carers able to provide such care. How are we to deal with this situation. The results of this research together with the recommendations in the "Who Cares" report, will inform future policy directions and keep the issues of caring on the national agenda. (www.carersnsw.asn.au)

We have recently made a number of submissions to inform future policy for Carers in the ACT including:

- Inquiry into better access to primary health care in the ACT. The submission will be available on our website when it is cleared by the ACT Legislative Assembly Committee.

- Review of Special Education Services in ACT Public Schools. This submission is available on our website (information/publications)

Thank you to those who had the opportunity to tell us what you think of Carers ACT and your rating of our service. There was a 30% response rate. This evaluation

is very important to us as it will help us identify where we need to improve. It also helps our funding bodies understand the impact of support and services on your life as a Carer and the importance of continued support in all aspects of your caring role and throughout your caring lifetime. The report is available on our website www.carersact.asn.au



We are now in the process of preparing to relocate to Holt. The new space is significantly more than our current two operations and will effect cost savings to ensure as much of our funding is directed into service delivery. Holt will provide some exciting opportunities for Carers to create new groups and activities at this space. See article about the upcoming Think Tank where you can share your ideas on how this space can be optimised for the benefit of Carers. Look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

Dee McGrath

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Carers Week 2009 Sunday 18 - Saturday 24 October

Carers Week is an awareness week held during October each year right across Australia. The event was established to promote and raise awareness of the valuable role that carers play in our community and to generate discussion about carer issues.

Carers Week also provides an opportunity for carers to come together, support one another and share ideas and information. Make sure you take some time out for yourself this Carers Week and spend time with some fellow Carers.

This year Carers ACT has combined Carers Week with the traditional bi-annual Carers Gathering and will be hosting a special overnight Carers Retreat by the Seaside. It will be at Eco Point, Murramarang Resort, near Batemans Bay on Sunday 18th October and Monday 19th October.

Limited spaces are still available please contact Lindy on 6296 9900 for more information or download a registration form at www.carers-act.asn.au

WE NEED YOUR IDEAS NOW!

Carers ACT has been offered an operational site at the old Holt Primary School. Our lease at our Belconnen Offices is coming to a close next year and, if we stay, our rent would significantly increase. As we are keen to ensure as much of our funding is directed to service delivery, Carers ACT has accepted the new space. While the Belconnen and Torrens operation will be relocated – around March 2010 – we will continue to offer counseling, information and intake/assessment in other locations around Canberra including Torrens or another small space in the Woden area.

Holt is located in West Belconnen and is accessible from a number of bus routes with the bus stop right outside our door. As 98% of Carers who access our services use a car, there will also be ample free parking at Holt.

The new space at Holt will enable us to grow if new program funding opportunities occur. Until this happens, the new space will enable us to develop a range of initiatives to support Carers. We would like to set up a Carers Hub where existing groups can meet, and new groups can develop, Carers can drop in for a coffee, a chat, use the library service or access the internet.

We will also be leasing the current school hall (with a stage and kitchen) and will be ideal for a number of existing forums such as the seasonal lunches, choir, information and support groups. However this space will also provide opportunities for new initiatives such as yoga, meditation and other activities.

We need your ideas and your input at this development stage. What sort of Carers Hub would you like to see? What activities can you suggest would be of interest to different groups of Carers?

Come and join our Think Tank for Carers 10am -12pm on Tuesday 25th August at the Belconnen Training Room, Ground Floor, Churches Centre, Benjamin Way ACT 2617. Come along and share your ideas. Please phone Lindy to RSVP on 6296 9900 by Friday 21st August.

Carers ACT After Carers group becomes self sufficient



In light of funding guidelines Carers ACT is no longer able to provide a worker to facilitate the After Carers group. However, the group has decided to continue on its own as a self supporting group. The group will continue to meet monthly at various venues in Canberra. This is a resourceful group of people who have provided invaluable support to each other in their bereavements. Dee McGrath met with the group to invite them to be a part of the new Carers ACT centre proposed for Holt. It is hoped that some of the members might like to support those who are still caring.

A calendar of meeting venues for the second half of the year has been drawn up by the group. Jill has enjoyed facilitating the After Carers group over the years and will miss the contact with the group members. We wish them well in their new and independent life.

Carers ACT plans to continue to run short term programs to support bereaved Carers, such as the Seasons for Growth groups we have run in the past. Information about these groups will be publicised in forthcoming newsletters.

Carers Calendar

Aug - Sep - Oct

All items on the Carers Calendar are FREE for family Carers.

Carers Craft group

Members work on their own craft items, group projects and learn new skills in a friendly environment.

9:30am Thursday 27th August

9:30am Thursday 24th September

9:30am Thursday 24th October

Carers ACT, Churches Centre, Benjamin Way, Belconnen.

Contact Lucinda on 62969 949 or lucindar@carersact.asn.au to RSVP



Carers Choir

1:00pm-2:30 pm every Monday (except on public holidays or during school holidays)

Training Room, Carers ACT, Churches Centre Benjamin Way, Belconnen.

A monthly Carers Sing-along replaces the Carers Choir on the first Monday of the month. Come and sing all those well known songs. If you play an instrument bring it along too. New members are always welcome.

Training Room, Carers ACT, Churches Centre Benjamin Way Belconnen.

Contact Lindy on 6296 9900 or lindyw@carersact.asn.au for more information.

Private viewing at the National Gallery of Australia for Carers

Tour and viewing for Carers exploring the Australian galleries and the exhibition Reinventions

10:30am Thursday 20th August

National Gallery of Australia, Parkes Place, Parkes.

Bookings essential, places limited. Contact Lindy on 6296 9900 or lindyw@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 Cafe.

10am Tuesday 18th August

10am Tuesday 15th September

10am Tuesday 20th October

National Gallery of Australia, Parkes Place, Parkes.

Bookings essential, places limited. Contact Lucinda on 62969949 or lucindar@carersact.asn.au.

Spring Seasonal Lunch at

Tulip Top Gardens

Tulip Top Gardens is a world class exhibition of half a million tulips. Hundreds of blossom trees nestle between the flowers and provide a magic pathway to the cascading waterfall, with classical music wafting through the air.

Wednesday 16th September 2009

Bus departing Belconnen at 9:30am (Platform tbc) returning at 2:30pm. Lunch provided.

Bookings essential, places limited. Contact Lindy on 6296 9900 or lindyw@carersact.asn.au by 9th September.

ANCA Gallery visit - Private viewing of " House of Blessings, Shrines and Shrouds".

This exhibition by Deborah Faeyrglenn and Cheryl Jobsz using the truth and fiction of family histories to create a series of shrines the components of which are gathered from expeditions to the op shop. Deborah is a Carer and will bring the perspective of being a Carer and an artist into her talk. Viewing and artist talk followed by a tea party morning tea.

10:30am - 12noon Wednesday 23rd September

Meet at ANCA Gallery 1 Rosevear PI Dickson.

Bookings essential phone Lindy on 6296 9900 or lindyw@carersact.asn.au, numbers are limited.



Carers Seaside Gathering 2009

This year Carers ACT has combined Carers Week with the traditional bi-annual Carers Gathering and will be hosting a special overnight Carers Retreat by the Seaside. It will be at Eco Point, Murramarang Resort, near Batemans Bay on Sunday 18th October and Monday 19th October.

Limited spaces are still available please contact Lindy on 6296 9900 for more information or download a registration form at www.carersact.asn.au

Support Groups Diary



Northside Carers Support Group

10am - 12noon at Room 3, Belconnen Community Centre, Swanson Court, Belconnen.

Wed 5 Aug Open Discussion
Wed 2 Sep Open Discussion
Wed 7 Oct Open Discussion

Southside Carers Support Group

10.30am - 12noon at Tuggeranong Community Centre, 245 Cowlshaw Street, Tuggeranong

Tue 11 Aug Open Discussion
Tues 8 Sep Open Discussion
Tues 13 Oct Open Discussion

Male Carers Support Group

11am - 12.30pm at the Lounge, Canberra Southern Cross Yacht Club, Lotus Bay, Yarralumla

Tue 18 Aug Open Discussion
Tue 22 Sep Open Discussion
Tue 20 Oct Open Discussion

Indigenous Carers Support Group

10am-2pm Boomanulla Oval, Goyder Street, Narrabundah

Thurs 20 Aug Lunch & Bingo
Thurs 17 Sep Lunch & Bingo
Thurs 15 Oct Lunch & Bingo

Parents of school age children with a disability

11am- 12.30pm at Carers ACT, 5/54 Benjamin Way, Belconnen
Thurs 13 Aug Open Discussion
Thurs 10 Sep Open Discussion
Thurs 8 Oct Open Discussion

Mature Carers Support Group

10.00am to 12.00pm at Torrens Shops, Torrens Place, Torrens.

Contact Isabelle for dates on 6290 7406

Arab Carers Support Group

12noon - 2pm at Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre, North Building, London Circuit, Civic

Tue 11 Aug Know your community
Tue 8 Sep Healthy food
Tue 6 Oct Physical exercise

Chinese Carers Support Group

10am - 12noon at Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre, North Building, London Circuit, Civic

Wed 5 Aug Know your community
Wed 2 Sep Tai Chi
Wed 7 Oct Tai Chi

Croatian Carers Support Group

11am - 1pm at the Canberra Labor Club, Belconnen

Mon 3 Aug Know your community
Mon 7 Sep Healthy food
Mon 5 Oct Physical exercise

Filipino Carers Support Group

1pm - 3pm at Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre, North Building, London Circuit, Civic

Sat 8 Aug Know your community
Sat 5 Sep Physical exercise
Sat 3 Oct Public housing

Greek Carers Support Group

10.30am - 12.30pm at the Orpheus Room, Hellenic Club, Woden

Thur 13 Aug Know your community
Thurs 10 Sep Healthy Food
Thurs 8 Oct Physical exercise

Hungarian Carers Support Group

11am - 1pm at Polish Australian White Eagle Club, Turner

Wed 26 Aug Know your community
Wed 30 Sep Physical exercise
We 28 Oct Public housing

Indian Carers Support Group

11am - 1pm at Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre, North Building, London Circuit, Civic

Sat 15 Aug Know your community
Sat 12 Sep Healthy food
Sat 10 Oct Physical exercise

Italian Carers Support Group

10.30am - 12noon at the Italo-Australian Club, Forrest

Fri 7 Aug Know your community
Fri 4 Sep Physical exercise
Fri 2 Oct Public housing

Polish Carers Support Group

11am - 1pm at Polish Australian White Eagle Club, Turner

Wed 26 Aug Know your community
Wed 30 Sep Physical exercise
We 28 Oct Public housing

Samoan Carers Support Group

11am - 1pm at Sts Peter and Paul Primary School, Wisdom St, Garran

Mon 24 Aug Know your community
Mon 21 Sep Physical exercise
Mon 26 Oct Public housing

Spanish Carers Support Group

11am - 1pm at the Canberra Labor Club, Belconnen

Mon 3 Aug Know your community
Mon 7 Sep Healthy food
Mon 5 Oct Physical exercise

Tamil Carers Support Group

11am - 1pm at Tamil Aged Care Home, 11 Bromby St, Issacs

Sat 22 Aug Know your community
Sat 19 Sep Physical exercise
Sat 24 Oct Public housing

Tongan Carers Support Group

12noon - 2pm at Tongan Community Centre, Copland Drive, Spence

Fri 28 Aug Know your community
Fri 25 Sep Physical exercise
Fri 31 Oct Public housing

Vietnamese Carers Support Group

10am - 12noon at Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre, North Building, London Circuit, Civic

Wed 5 Aug Know your community
Wed 2 Sep Tai Chi
Wed 7 Oct Tai Chi



Carers ACT Workshops

your wellbeing, understanding, coping skills

Seasons for Growth for Young Carers aged 12- 15 - boys & girls

Being a carer can mean our lives are very different from our friends. We can also experience lots of change. This eight week program supports young people to manage the issues they experience because of their caring role. The program can help build self esteem and self confidence in a small, friendly group environment.

4pm - 5.30pm Mondays 10th August - 28th September (8 sessions)

Tuggeranong Community Centre, Cowlshaw Street, Tuggeranong.

To register, contact Natalie on 6296 9938 or nataliet@carersact.asn.au.

Free for Young Carers.



Daughters Caring for Mothers

This is a four week course for women who are caring for their mothers. It will examine the relationship between mothers and daughters, past experiences and expectations on both sides and how these might be impinging on current issues.

10.00 am– 12.30 pm Tuesdays, 1st to 22nd September.

Training Room, Carers ACT, Churches Centre Benjamin Way Belconnen.

For more information and to register contact call 6296 9900.

Free for family carers.



Stress management

Learn to unwind and develop strategies to help you cope with life's challenges. This three week course offers the opportunity to discuss your stressors and work out practical ways of helping manage the stress in your lives. We practice different relaxation techniques, discuss self care and getting our lives in balance.

1pm - 3pm Wednesdays, 2nd - 16th September

Training Room, Carers ACT, Churches Centre Benjamin Way Belconnen.

For more information and to register contact call 6296 9900.

Free for family carers.

Caring Crisis Management

This is a six hour course for carers of family members who display difficult or aggressive behaviours. The course will consider how these behaviours come into being and what keeps them going. It helps carers to understand their own reactions and responses to these events. Caring Crisis Man-

agement (Carers) recognises the unique bonds and relationships within families and gives carers some practical hints at how to minimise the severity of these recurrent crises. Caring Crisis Management (Carers) is about surviving difficult situations when quick fixes are not possible.

6.00 - 8.00pm Tuesday evenings, 8th, 15th and 22nd September

Training Room, Carers ACT, Churches Centre Benjamin Way Belconnen.

Call 6296 9900 to register.

Free for family Carers.



Art Therapy

This three week program will use a range of art activities as a way of exploring our journeys. The goal of the course is not to produce masterpieces but to use art to express our experiences and feelings. Previous artistic experience is not required. Art materials will be provided. Please bring an old shirt to protect your clothes.

9.45 - 11.45am Wednesdays, 9th - 23rd September

Belconnen Community Centre, Swanson Court. Belconnen.

Facilitator: Alison Meretini

For more information and to register contact call 6296 9900.

COST: \$5.00

Carers ACT Workshops

your wellbeing, understanding, coping skills



Yoga and Relaxation

These classes will run for an hour and a half, and will incorporate hatha yoga and relaxation. Pam and Anne introduce gentle stretching movements, strengthening postures, balance exercises and relaxation techniques in the eight week course. Please bring a mat and a blanket.

Southside

5.30pm - 7pm Tuesdays, 13th October - 9th December (no class 3rd November)

Weston Creek Community Centre, Parkinson St, Weston.

TEACHER: Pam Bleakley (IYTA accredited)

Northside

6pm - 7.30pm Thursdays from 15th October - 3rd December

Majura Community Centre, Rosevear Place, Dickson

TEACHER: Anne McKinley (IYTA accredited)

For more information and to register contact call 6296 9900.

Free for family carers.

Labyrinth - a walking meditation

Carers are invited to join a walking meditation and relaxation at Rachum, a beautiful bush property. Alison Meretini will be facilitating the day's reflection. This is a day for you to take care of yourself - take time to be in the present, be with silence; and, if you wish, reflect on any personal issues. Lunch provided.

Carers who have not been to Rachum before will be given priority.

Please meet at 9.00am in the car park at the Belconnen Markets.

9.00am—4.00pm Wednesday 28th October

Numbers are limited. For more information and to register contact call 6296 9900.

COST: \$5.00

Do you care for someone with Dementia?

Here are some workshops which may benefit you...

Introduction to Computers

Come along and learn about all the useful things computers can do for you! No prior knowledge needed. Participants will learn at their own pace in a supportive environment. Your questions will be answered....

10.00 am—1.00 pm - 20th August, 27th August, 1st September, 3rd September, 8th September

Capital Careers, Level 3, Churches Centre, Benjamin Way, Belconnen.

To register contact Carers ACT on 6296 9900 by 5th August.

Beyond the Basics - Introduction to computers

Do you have some knowledge about computers but would like to know a bit more? Have you done our Introduction to Computers and are now excited to continue learning about computers and their uses? If so, this course is for you.

10.00 am—1.00 pm Thursdays 22nd, 27th October, 5th and 12th and 19th November.

Capital Careers, Level 3, Churches Centre, Benjamin Way, Belconnen.

To register contact Carers ACT on 6296 9900 by 7th October.

Cooking classes

Is cooking getting you down? Is preparing a meal new to you? If you would like some training in cooking simple, nutritious and low cost meals then this program could be for you! Carers can access up to three sessions on learning meal preparation.

Referrals to the program can be made by ringing 1800 052 222.

The computing and cooking programs are specifically for Carers of a person with dementia and have been made available through a grant from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

For respite help, contact your nearest Respite Centre on 1800 052 222.

ARE YOU NOW ELIGIBLE FOR CARER PAYMENT (CHILD)?

An extra 19,000 families are now expected to qualify.

From 1 July 2009, the qualification for carer payment (child) has been broadened to improve the support and assistance available for carers of children with severe disability or severe medical conditions. Income and assets tests still apply.

Carer Payment provides income support to carers who, because of the demands of their caring role, are unable to support themselves through substantial paid work. Carer Payment is income and assets tested and paid at the same rate as other social security pensions.

The most important change is to the way qualification for Carer Payment is assessed. The new method looks at the carer's total care load.

Other changes include:

- recognising more situations when carers will receive the payment
- the payment will be available to eligible carers who are looking after a person for a short period of time, (at least 3 months, less than 6 months)
- more sensitive and generous arrangements for carers of children with a terminal illness
- removing the 63 day limit on hospitalisation

- automatic Carer Allowance for carers who qualify for Carer Payment
- a wider range of health professionals able to complete medical forms.

Further information

From 1 July 2009 for information about rates, other assistance or your potential eligibility you can:

- visit the payment page on Centrelink's website www.centrelink.gov.au
- telephone Centrelink on 13 27 17 or for TTY service 1800 810 586
- visit your nearest Centrelink office.

Do you have feedback about these changes?

If so, you can email carer.reforms@fahcsia.gov.au or write to:

FaHCSIA

Carer Reform Implementation

TOP CE2

PO Box 7576

Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610

All feedback will be acknowledged and carefully considered in our review of Carer Payment over the next 12 months.

Federal Budget neglects key needs of Young Carers, Joan Hughes says.

The national program for Young Carers in Australia is in crisis, according to Carers Australia CEO Joan Hughes.

She was speaking at the launch of the "Bring It! 2008" forum report which recommends steps to better support and recognise Australia's young carers.

"Young Carers are in urgent need of support and assistance if they are to have the same rights, choices and opportunities as other young Australians," Ms Hughes said.

"Young carers can't wait until the next Budget for help. To delay any longer is to risk sacrificing the future of these caring young people who make such a difference to our society."

"The government has talked a lot about social inclusion, educa-

tion and training. No additional funds were allocated in the recent Budget to extend the Young Carer Program and better help young carers. "

The "Bring It! 2008" forum report shows that carers need continuing, flexible support and services, equal access to these. As well as

services that are culturally and age appropriate and based on best practice.

The report urges all professional groups and agencies to have policies and guidelines which include young carers. Likewise, mandatory awareness training across all groups who deal with carers, including doctors, teachers, social workers and those in hospitals.

"It has some great recommendations from participants including young carers, such as a 'no wrong door' policy which means that no

matter how the person or family comes in contact with government and support agencies, they should get appropriate help," Ms Hughes said.

"It also recommends a 'whole of family' approach, so that the whole family's needs are assessed, regardless of which family member first contacts an agency.

"Sadly, some agencies can forget that young carers can have adult-sized responsibilities when caring, and they aren't always treated with dignity and respect by all areas of government."

Ms Hughes said young carers were the future of our society, yet we were "ignoring their very real needs as carers."

The Bring it! Young Carers Forum 2008 Final Report is available at: <http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/?/national/article/view/1265>



ACT Companion Card

The ACT Companion Card program is currently under development and will form part of a national scheme that will include reciprocal arrangements with other States and Territories. This will allow ACT cardholders to use their card at over 1,800 businesses across Australia that currently accept the card.

What is the Companion Card?

The Companion Card will be issued to people with a disability who require lifelong attendant care support from a companion to participate at most venues and activities.

The card features a photograph of the cardholder and can be presented when booking or purchasing a ticket from a participating business. These businesses will recognise the Companion Card and issue the cardholder with a second ticket for their companion at no charge.

The Companion Card improves social and recreational opportunities for people with a disability and provides businesses with a practical way to meet some of their obligations under anti-discrimination and human rights legislation.

Who is eligible?

The Companion Card is not for everyone with a disability. An ACT Companion Card will only be issued to applicants who can demonstrate that they:

1. Lawfully reside in the ACT; and
2. Have a permanent disability; and
3. Are unable to participate at most community venues or activities without attendant care support; and
4. Need, or are likely to need, lifelong attendant care support.

What is attendant care support?

Attendant care support includes significant assistance with mobility, communication, self-care or decision-making, where the use of aids, equipment or alternative strategies do not enable the person to carry out these tasks independently. The Companion Card will not be provided to people who only require reassurance, social company or encouragement.



For more information

It is anticipated that the ACT program will commence accepting cardholder applications in August 2009. For more information about the program, please visit the ACT Companion Card website at www.companioncard.act.gov.au

This information was obtained from: <http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/companioncard>.

Continence Awareness Week 2009

Continence Awareness Week 2009 is being held on 2-8 August. The theme of this year's campaign is 'Caring for someone with incontinence'.

Incontinence "flows beneath" so many other health conditions, making it a major issue for the many at-home carers dealing with disability, mental illness, dementia, stroke, heart or prostate or neurological problems, terminal illness or those who are frail aged. Incontinence presents a significant additional load for carers - socially, emotionally, and financially.

Many carers find caring for a person with incontinence to be one of the most difficult aspects of

caring. Incontinence can be unpredictable, add dramatically to your workload and be very costly. Many carers report feeling angry, frustrated, lonely, and not coping as they try to manage alone. It is not always easy to care for a person with incontinence, but the right advice and support from a health professional may make it more manageable for you.

If the person you are caring for is incontinent the most important step for you to take is to seek professional help. The National Continence Helpline 1800 33 00 66 is a free and confidential service available to anyone living in Australia. The helpline is staffed

by Continence Nurse Advisors, who can provide you with practical information and advice including access to a wide range of information resources or details of a continence clinic located close to the person you are caring for. They have information about eligibility for various funding assistance schemes, including the Australian Governments Continence Aids Assistance Scheme (CAAS), and can clarify if you are entitled to a Carer Allowance or a Carer Payment.

The National Continence Helpline freecall 1800 33 00 66 for information and advice about bladder and bowel control problems, or visit www.continence.org.au.

Disability and Community Services, ACT Human Rights Commission

The ACT Human Rights Commission was formed in November 2006 when the Human Rights Commission Act 2005 commenced. The main object of this Act is to promote the human rights and welfare of people living in the ACT.

Avenues available to the Disability and Community Services Commissioner to achieve this are:

- Advocating improvements in the provision of disability services.
- Promoting the rights of users of disability services.
- Raising awareness of the rights and responsibilities of users and providers of services.
- Providing an independent, fair and accessible process for the resolution of discrimination complaints and complaints between users and providers of disability services.
- Suggesting and recommending systemic improvements in services when identified through complaints or other means, and
- Fostering community discussion, and the provision of com-

munity education and information about human rights, the commission and how it operates and the procedures for making complaints.

A dedicated Disability and Community Services Advisor works to the Disability and Community Services Commissioner to support these roles. The Advisor is someone with an extensive background in the disability area who:

- Provides advice to the Commissioner on disability policy and law reform.
- Fosters strategic working relationships with a range of people involved in the disability sector, users, carers and providers.
- Manages projects relating to improvements for people with disabilities, including improvements to complaint mechanisms.
- Represents the Commissioner as required.
- Considers complaints and conducts reviews of services, and
- Develops and delivers community education.

One of the primary ways the Disability and Community Services Commissioner becomes aware of issues in the disability sector is through people lodging complaints about disability services in the ACT. This provides the Commissioner with an insight as to what is happening in the disability sector at any given time, systemic issues in the sector (if there are enough complaints) and the robustness of disability agencies' complaint handling mechanisms.

Do you have a disability?

Do you receive a service from a disability service provider?

Are you unhappy with that service?

Would you like to do something about it?

Have you complained to the service provider and you're not satisfied with the outcome?

Contact the ACT Human Rights Commission Disability and Community Services Advisor on 6205 2222 if you would like to discuss your concerns, visit the Commission at 12 Moore St, Canberra City or go to www.hrc.act.gov.au and download a 'Services Form'.

\$7.2 million to support children who have disabilities or who are disadvantaged in non-government schools

The ACT Labor Government have announced that they will invest \$7.2 million over the next four years to help children with disabilities and children who are disadvantaged to reach their full potential in non-government schools.

Minister for Education and Training Andrew Barr said

"Like ACT public schools, many non-government schools, particularly low-fee schools, are providing excellent support and education for students with special needs and those who are facing financial or other hardship.

"[So] we are increasing our investment in students with a disability who go to non-government schools by \$1.6 million.

"And we are providing an extra \$2.4 million to assist students who go to non-government schools and who are identified as having special learning needs or who are from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds."

Carers ACT supports this positive step made by the local Labor Government.

Scams to Look Out For

Part of a continuing series from “The Little Black Book of Scams”

Health and Medical Scams

Medical scams offer solutions where none exist or promise to simplify complex health treatments.

What to look for...

Miracle cure scams offer a range of products and services that can appear to be legitimate alternative medicines, usually promising quick and effective remedies for serious medical conditions.

The treatments claim to be effective against a very wide range of ailments and are often promoted using testimonials from people who have used the product or service and have been ‘cured’.

Weight loss scams promise dramatic weight loss with little or no effort. This type of scam may involve an unusual or restrictive diet, revolutionary exercise or ‘fat-

busting’ devices, or breakthrough products such as pills, patches or creams.

The products are promoted with the use of false claims such as ‘lose 10 kilos in 10 days’ or ‘lose weight while you sleep’ and often require large advance payments or that you enter into a long term contract to participate in the program.

Fake online pharmacies use the internet and spam emails to offer drugs and medicine at very cheap prices and/or without the need for a prescription from a doctor. If you use such a service and you actually do receive the products that you order, there is no guarantee that they are the real thing.

There are legitimate online pharmacies. These businesses will have their full contact details listed

on their website and will also require a valid prescription before they send out any medicine that requires one.

Remember: There are no magic pills, miracle cures or safe options for rapid weight loss.

Caution: Never commit to anything under pressure.

Think: Don’t trust an unsubstantiated claim about medicines, supplements or other treatments. Consult your healthcare professional.

Investigate: Ask for published medical and research papers to support the claims made by the promoters.

Ask yourself: If this really is a miracle cure, wouldn’t your healthcare professional have told you about it?

Psychic & clairvoyant scams

Psychic or clairvoyant scams have been around for a long time. Scammers often offer you their secrets to wealth and other plans or insights that they claim will bring you good fortune and money.

A psychic or clairvoyant scam can come to you in many ways: through the post, in an email, by a telephone call or even face-to-face.

Generally, a psychic or clairvoyant scammer will claim to know that you are in some sort of trouble and offer you a solution—for a fee. This ‘solution’ could be some winning lottery numbers, a lucky charm or the removal of a curse or jinx.

Scammers may also try and talk you into buying their ‘secret of wealth’ or other plans or ‘insights’ that they claim will change the

course of your life forever.

Scammers make money by charging you to claim your lucky charm or secret to wealth and sending you a worthless item—or nothing at all—in return.

Psychic scams can also be used to set you up to fall for a lottery scam too. If a psychic gives you a list of lucky lottery numbers, don’t be surprised if you receive a letter soon afterwards telling you that you’ve just won a lottery you’ve never heard of and do not remember entering. Don’t get stung twice—refer to page 6 to read about lottery scams.

The psychic or clairvoyant may try to convince you that they are genuine by telling you something about yourself. Is what they are telling you vague or general? It could therefore be true of anyone.

Remember: Psychic and clairvoyant scams prey on your curiosity.

Caution: Never send money or give credit card or online account details to anyone you do not know and trust. If the offer came in an email, do not respond to the email and do not try to unsubscribe. This will only confirm to the scammers that your email address is active.

Think: Take a step back and carefully consider any advice or suggestions given by someone who claims to be a psychic.

Investigate: Examine whether there is any evidence to support the claims made by the psychic or clairvoyant.

Ask yourself: Am I putting myself and my family or friends at risk by acting on the random advice of a stranger?

From House to Home Project

ACT Government Department of Disability Housing and Community Services

'If you could do anything, what accommodation and support would you provide for a person with high and complex needs?' This was the question put to participants at meetings held during July for the From House to Home Project currently being undertaken by the ACT Department of Disability Housing and Community Services.

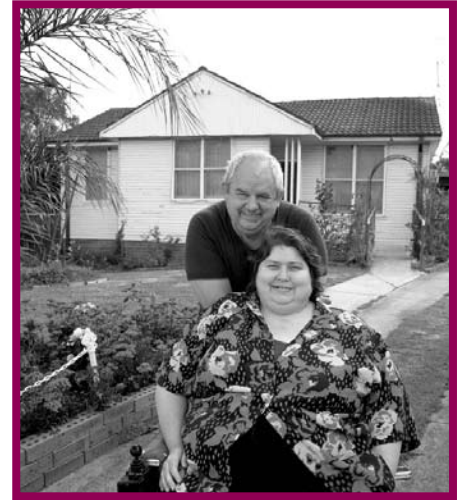
The From House to Home project was established to look into accommodation and support for people with high and complex needs. This project is being undertaken to identify what accommodation and support options are available for individuals who, because of their disability, cannot access the private or public housing markets.

Josh Rynehart, Project Manager of From House to Home says 'This project is focusing on accommodation and support models for people with the highest and most complex needs in the ACT community.' Specifically, the project aims to identify suitable and sustainable accommodation models for people who cannot access a house because of their disability, where a property needs to be purpose-built or substantially modified to meet their needs.

The From House to Home project aims to deliver three main outcomes:

1. A demographic model forecasting accommodation demand from people with high and complex needs;
2. A range of accommodation and support models; and,
3. A range of specific property designs for possible future use.

In order to achieve these outcomes the project is working together with the community sector as well as individuals who have experience in accommodation issues for people with high and complex needs. So far, input has been gained from two community meetings as well as several individual meetings with people who have a disability, their families and Carers, on what types of accommodation and housing they think should be used in the future. Information gathered at these meetings, along with information gained through research of National and International accommodation models, will be included in the project report.



If you would like more information on the From House to Home project or would like to provide input please contact Josh Rynehart on 02 6205 9982 or by email: josh.rynehart@act.gov.au



Learn to Manage your Money

Brought to you by The Smith Family and Carers ACT.

FREE course for Family Carers, with the option to obtain a nationally recognised qualification!

We will show you how to:

- Set personal and financial goals
- Prepare a spreadsheet to plan for all household bills
- Understand superannuation
- Manage your debt
- Access and understand your credit file
- Understand your rights and responsibilities

At the end of the course you will receive:

- A Certificate of Participation
- A calculator
- A folder to help you organise your savings plan
- The option to obtain a Certificate I in Financial Services (for a small cost of \$60 payable to the Registered Training Organisation)



everyone's family

A facilitator with nationally accredited training qualifications (Certificate IV in Training & Assessment) will deliver each session. The course provides participants with activity sheets, workshop summaries and case studies.

Refreshments will be provided.

The course consists of 4 x 2 hour sessions.

Places are limited so register today!

When: Mondays 26th October, 2nd, 9th and 16th November 10am -12noon

Where: Belconnen Carers ACT meeting room, 54 Benjamin Way Belconnen

To sign up or find out more phone: 02 6296 9900

The Smith Family's vision is for a more caring and cohesive Australian community. Our mission is to unlock opportunities for disadvantaged families to participate more fully in society, using education as the key.

MoneyMinded
financial skills for the future

Medicare Teen Dental Plan



What is the Medicare Teen Dental Plan?

On 1 July 2008, the Australian Government introduced the Medicare Teen Dental Plan to help with the cost of an annual dental preventative check. The program aims to make it more affordable for families to keep their teenager's teeth in good health.

Who is eligible under the Medicare Teen Dental Plan?

You are eligible for the plan if you are a teenager:

- aged 12–17 years;
- receiving ABSTUDY, Carer Payment, Disability Support Pension, Parenting Payment, Special Benefit, Youth Allowance; or
- whose family/carer/guardian receives Family Tax Benefit Part A (FTB-A), or Parenting Payment, or the Double Orphan Pension for the teenager; or
- whose partner receives FTB-A or Parenting Payment; or
- 16 or older and receiving financial assistance under the Veterans' Children Education Scheme (VCES) or the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme (MRCAETS) from the Department of Veterans' Affairs
- eligible to claim Medicare benefits.

What happens if I'm eligible?

If you're eligible, a letter and voucher advising of your eligibility for a preventative dental check will be sent to you or your family or carer. If you are in equal shared care arrangements, a letter and voucher will be sent to each parent or carer.

What is the voucher for?

The voucher gives you entitlement to claim a benefit from Medicare Australia of up to the amount of \$153.45† per year once you have seen your dentist and had a preventative dental check. Vouchers are only valid for the person named on the voucher and cannot be transferred to another person. The voucher must be used within the calendar year it is issued. Benefit as at 1 January 2009.

What is a preventative dental check?

A preventative dental check must consist of an oral examination and if necessary, your dentist may also:

- take x-rays
- provide a scale and clean
- provide a fluoride treatment
- give you oral hygiene instructions
- provide dietary advice
- seal pits or cracks in a tooth (fissure sealing).

How do I go about having a preventative dental check?

Once you have received your voucher the following steps will help you receive your benefit.

Step 1—make an appointment with a dentist

When making the appointment with the dentist, you will need to check that the dentist will provide

a preventative dental check under the Medicare Teen Dental Plan and whether you will be expected to pay anything up-front.

Step 2—have your preventative dental check

You need to take your voucher to the dentist when you have your preventative dental check.

Step 3—claiming for your preventative dental check

After your preventative dental check, the dentist will bill you in one of three ways.

The dentist will bulk bill the service by asking you to sign an Assignment of Benefit form so the dentist can claim directly from Medicare Australia.

The dentist will ask you to pay in full for the service. You can claim your benefit by submitting your account/receipt at your nearest Medicare office or by post.

The dentist will give you an unpaid account. You can take your account to your nearest Medicare office or post it to Medicare Australia. We will send you a cheque made out to the dentist for the benefit amount. You must forward the cheque to the dentist along with any gap amount you owe.

Need more information?

Call Medicare Australia on 132 011 or visit any Medicare office. You can also visit the Department of Health and Ageing website at www.health.gov.au/dental.

This information was obtained from: <http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au>

Falls Prevention Learning Circle

The After Caring group has undertaken a four session Falls Prevention Learning Circle in Curtin. The Learning Circle has been sponsored by ACT Health and Adult Learning Australia. Members each received a manual on Falls Prevention and discussed strategies for staying on their feet. Another Falls Prevention Learning Circle for Carers is planned for the future at our Belconnen office. Please ring Lindy on 6296 9900 to express your interest.

Outreach Counselling

Mal Gibson has been a counsellor with Carers ACT for the past four years. Mal says his farewells to the many Carers he has supported over the years. He will now be working in his own practice. We wish Mal every success with his new business.

Lydia Stanhope now joins the counselling team and will be our outreach counsellor. For August, Lydia will be available Wednesday afternoons and all day Fridays throughout August.

Lydia will be servicing the Tuggeranong area to give Carers ease of access to multi sites for counselling. The other members of our Counseling team, Katina, Jan and Alison - will continue to work from the Balcones and Torrens careers ACT sites. Appointments can be made by calling the Carers Advisory line 1800 242 636.

Book Review

The Horse Boy, by Rupert Isaacson

When his son Rowan was diagnosed with autism, Rupert Isaacson was devastated, afraid he might never be able to communicate with his child. But when Isaacson, a lifelong horseman, rode their neighbor's horse with Rowan, Rowan improved immeasurably. He was struck with a crazy idea: why not take Rowan to Mongolia, the one place in the world where horses and shamanic healing intersected?

THE HORSE BOY is a heartwarming story of that impossible adventure. In Mongolia, the family found undreamed of landscapes and people, unbearable setbacks, and advances beyond their wildest dreams. This is a deeply moving, truly one-of-a-kind story--of a family willing to go to the ends of the earth to help their son, and of a boy learning to connect with the world for the first time.

This book is available for the Carers ACT library.

Carers ACT is the recognised and expert voice for carers, and a member of the National Network of Carers Associations. We are a non-profit association that relies on public and private sector support to fulfil its mission with and on behalf of Carers. We are governed by a volunteer board of directors with caring and professional skills who set the strategic direction of the organisation and oversee financial and legal governance.

Our Vision:

Caring is accepted as a shared community responsibility

Our Mission:

Leading change and action with and for Carers

Contact Us:

Belconnen Office:

Ground Floor, Churches Centre,
Benjamin Way, Belconnen ACT 2617
Phone: 6296 9900 Fax: 6296 9999
E-mail: carers@carersact.asn.au
<http://www.carersact.asn.au>

Torrens Office:

1 Torrens Place, Torrens ACT 2607
<http://www.carersact.asn.au>

Commonwealth Carelink & Carer Respite Centre 1800 052 222*

Carer Advisory Service 1800 242 636*

* An Australian Government Initiative.

Free local call. Mobile phones will be charged at mobile phone rates.

Patron Mr R J Cahill, OAM,
Chief Magistrate

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of Carers ACT Inc. Articles in this newsletter may be reproduced with permission of the Editor (Colleen Donohoe).

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:

Friday 9 October 2009. Please send articles and items to carers@carersact.asn.au.

Would you or someone you know like to become a member of Carers ACT?

Membership is **FREE** and benefits include: Delivery of our quarterly Newsletter to your home, special invitations to Carers ACT events, and a buy-one-get-one-free arrangement for Carers at Hoyts Cinemas. By being a member of Carers ACT you also enable us to represent a stronger Carers voice to Government and the community. To become a member, simply fill out and return the **MEMBERSHIP FORM** below to: Carers ACT, Ground Floor, Churches Centre, Benjamin Way, Belconnen ACT 2617

Title First name Surname
Address Postcode
Phone Mobile Email
Gender: Male Female Date of Birth Country of Birth
Are you Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? Yes No Are you a family Carer? Yes No

If you are a family Carer, please provide the details of the person you are caring for & answer other questions below:

Title First name Surname
Gender: Male Female Date of Birth Country of Birth
Condition of Care Recipient: Disability Chronic illness Frail aged Mental illness Other
Option: Specify Condition Is he/she Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? Yes No
How long have you been caring?
What is your relationship to your cared for person?

By signing this form you are agreeing to allow us to store your information in our confidential database, provide this information (without your name and address) to our funding bodies for statistical and planning purposes, and send you relevant information, including a copy our quarterly Newsletter (4 per year) and invitations to workshops and special member events. Signed: _____ Date: ___/___/___

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 I have enclosed a cheque/money order for my donation payable to "Carers ACT" OR
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