



\$1.5 million in emergency support for Carers



Just before Christmas, the ACT Government announced \$1.5 million in funds to benefit Carers. This made front page news in the Canberra Times on Wednesday 10th December, with ACT Young Carer Tamara Haines and her father Rickey, interviewed and photographed for the article.

Carers ACT welcomed the funding boost, which will be distributed through community organisations.

This has come in addition to the Federal Government's Economic Stimulus Package, which was delivered to Carers, pensioners and families before Christmas.

Carers ACT CEO Dee McGrath said "I think this shows a greater understanding from Governments on the costs of caring."

Assistance will mainly be in the form of petrol vouchers, phone cards, taxi vouchers and bus tickets.

Funds distribution may also include support to purchase energy and water efficient whitegoods and essential household items associated with the caring role, personal care needs for carers, such as hair-cuts and medical needs, and for situations where emergency funds are required. Assistance for young carers may include financial support for shoes and clothing, and educational support, such as book packs and uniforms.

Carers ACT has received just \$150,000 of these funds to provide support to Carers, but funds for Carers are also being distributed by the following organisations:

- Tandem - for Carers of people with disability
- Mental Health Foundation - for Carers of someone with a mental illness
- CYCLOPS - for young Carers
- All Regional Community Centres
- Communities@work

Cheaper fares for seniors around Australia

Seniors around Australia are now able to access concession fares on most interstate public transport systems. From 1 January, the new national scheme started rolling out to allow seniors to use their concession cards outside their home state.

When fully operational, over three million Australians who hold seniors cards will benefit. Until now, Seniors Cards have only entitled the holder to public transport concession in their home state. The scheme will make it more affordable for seniors to visit friends and families outside their home state.

The new arrangements will mean seniors travelling interstate can now access cheaper fares on local transport in their destination city. The scheme has commenced on 1 January in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

Discussions with the Western Australian and Queensland governments are continuing.

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From the CEO

Dear Carers,

A Happy New Year to you all!

Firstly, I would like to draw your attention to the array of workshops we have planned over the next few months. There is sure to be something that will be useful and enjoyable for everyone, so I encourage all of you to take some time out to get involved. See page 6 for details.

On pages 8 and 9 you will notice that the Mental Health Carer Representation Program is in full swing now. There are a number of workshops and forums specific to Carers of a person with a mental illness who want to use their knowledge to make a difference in the mental health arena, both for consumers and Carers. If you would like more information about this program, or the related forums and workshops, please contact the program coordinator, Margaret Wooldridge, on 6296 9900.



On page 10 you will find the details on the 2009 National Conference on Caring. We realise that there are some Carers who would love to attend and contribute but do not have the financial means to do so. As such we are taking applications for two subsidised places at the conference. The closing date for applications is very soon, so turn to page 10 if you are interested and find out all of the details.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to the reminder notice on the bottom half of this page. Carers ACT has extended open hours to assist Carers who cannot access our office during the week. I encourage all of those Carers who identified this need to take advantage of the extended hours, they are in place just for you!

We hope you get a lot out of this first edition of Carers News for 2009 and welcome any comments and suggestions: 6296 9900.

Warm regards,
Dee McGrath

REMINDER: Carers ACT is now open on Saturday mornings

The Carers ACT Belconnen Office is now open every Saturday from 9am until 12noon. So, if you are a Carer who finds it difficult to access our services mid week, due to work or other commitments, and would prefer to discuss your individual needs face-to-face with one of our coordinators, make an appointment to see us on a Saturday soon by calling 6296 9900.

Supports available on Saturday mornings include:

- intake and assessments for respite or other support programs;
- problem solving - helping you find information on accessing community or government services, or assisting you with any other issues of concern
- assistance in completing Centrelink forms to access Carer Payment or Allowance
- confidential counselling

If you just want some information over the phone, please feel free to give us a call on 6296 9900 between 9am and 12pm on Saturdays.

Carer Support Groups

New Developments

Carers ACT facilitates a number of support groups in Canberra. Support groups can provide safe places for Carers to share their experiences, thoughts, feelings and concerns in a respectful and mutually supportive environment. Groups include:

- North and Southside Carer support groups
- Male Carers support group
- Indigenous Carers support group
- Fifteen culturally and linguistically diverse Carer groups
- Young Carer groups
- Mature Carers group
- Group for parents of school aged children who are disabled
- New group for Carers of someone with an eating disorder
- Social group for bereaved Carers.

Many carers find sharing their experiences with other carers is

helpful. They can pick up tips on managing the caring role, share how they are feeling with people who have some understanding of the pressures and demands of caring, and have a laugh about the ups and downs in their lives. As one carer put it "It helps us to let off steam, and share problems, thereby helping each other to understand the whole picture"

Another Carer summarised the benefits of a Carer Support group for her as "Accepting help from others, giving help myself if I can, accepting friendship, giving friendship, picking up some great ideas, learning some practical things, and having a cuppa!"

Until recently there were four general Carer support groups – two on the Southside and two on the Northside. These groups are now being combined. There will be one Southside Carer Support group that meets at Tuggeranong

Community Centre on the second Tuesday of the month from 10am – 12pm. There will also be one Northside Carer Support group that meets at Belconnen Community Centre on the first Wednesday of the month from 10am – 12pm. These two groups will be facilitated by Alison Meretini - one of our counsellors.

For meeting information on all of our Carer support groups, see page 5.

There are also a number of condition specific groups run by other organisations around Canberra. A helpful website is <http://www.shout.org.au/topics.php>

If you are interested in joining a support group, but are not sure which group would suit you best, please ring Jill at Carers ACT on 6296 9900 and she will discuss your needs with you.

Attention all those who use wheelchair-accessible taxis...

Did you know that there is a process available for anyone who may wish to complain about the wheelchair accessible taxi service?

The Road Transport Authority says it is committed to ensuring that the disabled community receives equal access to taxi services.

Your ongoing help is needed to identify problems with the service. If your taxi doesn't arrive on time, at all, or if you experience driver behaviour that concerns you please email : taxiservices@act.gov.au or write to:

Road Transport
WAT Services
GPO Box 151
Civic Square ACT 2608

Are you caring for someone with a disability?

Carers ACT is running a focus group for Carers to have input into Disability ACT's 3 year Strategic Plan. This is a unique opportunity to influence directions in disability policy and service provision in the ACT.

WHEN? 12noon - 2pm on Thursday 26th February.

WHERE? Carers ACT Belconnen Office, 5/54 Benjamin Way, Belconnen

RSVP? To Lindy on 6296 9900 or lindyw@carersact.asn.au by Friday 20th February.

Carers Calendar

February - March - April

All events are free for family Carers.

Art Appreciation Group

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

- **10am Tuesday 17th February**
- **10am Tuesday 17th March**
- **10am Tuesday 21st April**

Call Lucinda on 6296 9900 to register, numbers limited



Craft Group

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

- **9.30am Thursday 26th February**
- **9.30am Thursday 26th March**
- **9.30am Thursday 23rd April**

Carers ACT, Churches Centre, Benjamin Way, Belconnen

Please RSVP - contact Lucinda on 6296 9900 or lucindar@carersact.asn.au.



Carers Singing Group

1.00pm - 2.30pm Monday's (except on public holidays or during the school holidays) at Carers ACT, Churches Centre, Benjamin Way, Belconnen.

For more information, call Lindy on 6296 9900 or lindyw@carersact.asn.au

Autumn Seasonal Lunch

9:45am – 2:45pm Wednesday
11th March 2009

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve

Meet at the Belconnen Bus Interchange (platform tbc) at 9:45am for a chartered bus to Tidbinbilla, followed by a guided tour of the reserve and a BBQ lunch.

Bookings are essential – please RSVP by Wednesday 4th March by calling Lindy on 6296 9900 or lindyw@carersact.asn.au



Access to Art

Are you a tenant of public or community housing and have an interest in art? Then this is for you!

Access to Art is a program that will enable public and community housing tenants who are aged 55 or older or who are caring for a loved one to participate in different art courses across Canberra. The program has been running since October 2007 and has seen over 25 people produce some fantastic works. Last year's courses culminated in a public exhibition of the wonderful work produced!

The program will assist tenants in finding out what art courses are available and will meet the cost of the course and some materials. No experience is necessary, this is a great way to have some fun and enjoy the well known benefits of creativity. If this sounds like your kind of thing then get in touch!

To find out more, come along to the information session held from 5:00pm to 6:00pm on Tuesday 17th February at the Community Room, Woden Community Service (26 Corinna St opposite the Phillip Health Centre).

Want to know more? To RSVP or for more information call Lynton on 6234 6822

This project has been funded through the ACT Government's Community Linkages Program: Tenant Initiated Grants

Support Groups Diary

Northside Carers Support Group

10am - 12noon at Room 3,
Belconnen Community Centre,
Swanson Court, Belconnen.
Wed 4 Feb Open Discussion
Wed 4 Mar Open Discussion
Wed 1 Apr Open Discussion

Southside Carers Support Group

10.30am - 12noon at Tuggeranong
Community Centre, 245 Cowlshaw
Street, Tuggeranong
Tues 10 Feb Open Discussion
Tues 10 Mar Open Discussion
Tues 7 Apr Open Discussion

Bereaved Carers Support Group

10.30am - 12noon at St James
Church, Gillies St, Curtin
Wed 25 Feb Falls Prevention
Wed 25 Mar Falls Prevention
Wed 22 Apr Falls Prevention

Male Carers Support Group

11am - 12.30pm at the Lounge,
Canberra Southern Cross Yacht
Club, Lotus Bay, Yarralumla
Tue 17 Feb Open Discussion
Tue 24 Mar Open Discussion
Tue 21 Apr Open Discussion

Mature Carers Support Group

10.00am to 12.00pm at Torrens
Shops, Torrens Place, Torrens
Wed 18 Feb Hatha Yoga
Wed 22 Apr Disability ACT

Indigenous Carers Support Group

10am-2pm Boomanulla Oval,
Goyder Street, Narrabundah
Thurs 19 Feb Lunch & Bingo
Thurs 19 Mar Lunch & Bingo
Thurs 16 Apr Lunch & Bingo

Parents of school age children with a disability

11am - 12.30pm at Carers ACT,
5/54 Benjamin Way, Belconnen
Thurs 12 Feb Open Discussion
Thurs 12 Mar Open Discussion
Thurs 9 Apr Open Discussion

Employed Carers Meet and Greet

5.30pm for 5.45pm to 7.30pm on
Tuesday, 24th February at Carers
ACT, 5/54 Benjamin Way, Belconnen

Carers of a person with an eating disorder

6.30pm - 8.30pm Fortnightly
on Wednesdays at Carers ACT
Belconnen, Churches Centre,
Benjamin Way, Belconnen
Wed 25 Feb Session 1
Wed 11 Mar Session 2
Wed 25 Mar Session 3
Wed 8 Apr Session 4
Wed 22 Apr Session 5

Arab Carers Support Group

12noon - 2pm at Theo Notaras
Multicultural Centre, North Building,
London Circuit, Civic
No meeting in Feb
Tues 10 Mar Falls Prevention
Tues 7 Apr Picnic

Chinese Carers Support Group

10am - 12noon at Theo Notaras
Multicultural Centre, North Building,
London Circuit, Civic
No meeting in Feb
Wed 4 Mar Palliative Care
Wed 1 Apr Picnic

Croatian Carers Support Group

11am - 1pm at the Canberra Labor
Club, Belconnen
No meeting in Feb
Mon 2 Mar TBC
Mon 6 April TBC
Call 6296 9900

Filipino Carers Support Group

1pm - 3pm at Theo Notaras
Multicultural Centre, North Building,
London Circuit, Civic
No meeting in Feb
Sat 7 Mar Falls Prevention
Sat 4 Apr Picnic

Greek Carers Support Group

10.30am - 12.30pm at the Orpheus
Room, Hellenic Club, Woden
No meeting in Feb
Thurs 12 Mar Falls Prevention
Thurs 9 Apr Picnic

Hungarian Carers Support Group

11am - 1pm at Polish Australian
White Eagle Club, Turner
No meeting in Feb
Wed 25 Mar Mental Health
Wed 29 Apr Picnic

Indian Carers Support Group

11am - 1pm at Theo Notaras
Multicultural Centre, North Building,
London Circuit, Civic
No meeting in Feb
Sat 14 Mar Mental Health
Sat 11 Apr Picnic

Italian Carers Support Group

10.30am - 12noon at the Italo-
Australian Club, Forrest
No meeting in Feb
Fri 6 Mar Mental Health
Fri 3 Apr Picnic

Polish Carers Support Group

11am - 1pm at Polish Australian
White Eagle Club, Turner
No meeting in Feb
Wed 25 Mar Mental Health
Wed 29 Apr Picnic

Samoan Carers Support Group

11am - 1pm at Sts Peter and Paul
Primary School, Wisdom St, Garran
No meeting in Feb
Mon 30 Mar Mental Health
Mon 27 Apr Picnic/Public Hol.

Spanish Carers Support Group

12pm - 2pm at the Training Room,
Carers ACT, Belconnen
No meeting in Feb
Mon 2 Mar TBC
Mon 6 April TBC
Call 6296 9900

Tamil Carers Support Group

11am - 1pm at Tamil Aged Care
Home, 11 Bromby St, Issacs
No meeting in Feb
Sat 21 Mar Mental Health
Sat 18 Apr Picnic

Tongan Carers Support Group

12noon - 2pm at Tongan Community
Centre, Copland Drive, Spence
No meeting in Feb
Fri 27 Mar Mental Health
Fri 24 Apr Picnic

Vietnamese Carers Support Group

10am - 12noon at Theo Notaras
Multicultural Centre, North Building,
London Circuit, Civic
No meeting in Feb
Wed 4 Mar Mental Health
Wed 1 Apr Picnic

Carers ACT Workshops

your wellbeing, understanding, coping skills



Yoga and Relaxation

The class will run for an hour and half and will incorporate hatha yoga and relaxation. Please bring your own mat and blanket.

Northside

WHEN: 6pm – 7.30pm Thursday evenings from 19th February – 9th April (eight sessions)

WHERE: Majura Community Centre, Functions Room, Rosevear Place, Dickson

FACILITATOR: Anne McKinley

Southside

5.30pm -7pm Tuesday evenings, from 28th April – 16th June (eight sessions)

WHERE: Weston Creek Community Centre Hall, Parkinson St, Weston

FACILITATOR: Pam Bleakley

CONTACT: 6296 9900 to register

COST: Free for family Carers

Are you supporting someone with an eating disorder?

Carers ACT is facilitating six sessions for family members of a person with an eating disorder. We will be meeting in the evening on a fortnightly basis. It will be a chance to meet other Carers, and discuss ways of managing the challenges of the caring role in a supportive environment.

WHEN: 6.30pm – 8.30pm starting Wednesday 25th February for six fortnights until 6th May.

WHERE: Carers ACT Belconnen, Churches Centre, Benjamin Way, Belconnen

FACILITATORS: Katina Ellis and Jill Pierce

CONTACT: 6296 9900 to register

COST: Free for family Carers



Life Writing

A series of six writing workshops for Carers. No writing experience is needed, just a willingness to put pen to paper.

WHEN: 1pm – 3 pm Thursday afternoons from 5th March - 2nd April

WHERE: Room 1, Weston Creek Community Centre, Parkinson St, Weston

FACILITATOR: Gerrie Mackay

COST: Free for family Carers



Seasons for Growth

Caring involves much change and some subsequent loss, as well as gains, in our lives. This workshop will discuss managing the change, loss and grief we can experience. Bereaved Carers will also benefit from this Program.

WHEN: 10am – 12.30 pm Thursday 5th March

WHERE: Carers ACT Belconnen, Churches Centre, Benjamin Way, Belconnen

FACILITATOR: Jill Pierce

CONTACT: 6296 9900 to register

COST: Free for family Carers

Book making and Journaling

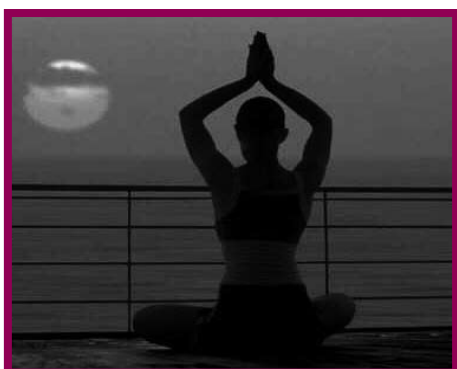
In this workshop you will learn how to make a creative book or Journal. Different ideas and techniques will be shown so you can develop your own style. You may like to bring special papers or posters. All other material will be provided. No experience is necessary.

WHEN: 10am – 4pm Saturday 14th March

WHERE: Carers ACT Belconnen, Churches Centre, Benjamin Way, Belconnen

FACILITATOR: Barbara Jackson

COST: \$5.00



Carers ACT Workshops

your wellbeing, understanding, coping skills

Labyrinth Walk

Walking meditation and relaxation at Rachum, a beautiful bush property about an hour from Canberra. Carers meet at Belconnen and catch a mini bus to Rachum together, lunch is provided. This is a day out for you to take care of yourself, take time to be in the present and reflect.

WHEN: 9.30am – 4pm Wednesday 18th March

WHERE: A bus will take you out there; meet at 9am at the Belconnen Markets

FACILITATOR: Alison Meretini

CONTACT: 6296 9900 to register

COST: \$5.00



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 to manage the stress in your lives.

WHEN: 10.30am – 12.30pm
Three Tuesdays from 24th March – 7th April

WHERE: Carers ACT Belconnen, Churches Centre, Benjamin Way, Belconnen

FACILITATOR: Jill Pierce

CONTACT: 6296 9900 to register

COST: Free for family Carers



Introduction to Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a meditative approach to life based on the understanding that "the present is the only time that any of us have to be alive-to know anything-to perceive-to learn-to act-to change-to heal" (Kabat-Zinn,1990). This course will assist you to respond to situations in a fully present way.

WHEN: 6.30 pm – 8.30 pm
Tuesday evenings from April 28th – May 26th

WHERE: Carers ACT Belconnen, Churches Centre, Benjamin Way, Belconnen

FACILITATOR: Sandi Plummer, Psychologist

CONTACT: 6296 9900 to register

COST: Free for family Carers

Centrelink Financial Information Seminars

Call: 13 63 57 or email: fis.seminar.bookings@centrelink.gov.au to register your place.

Age Pension and Your Choices

Looks at qualifications for Age Pension, assessment of income and assets, concessions, rates, the Pension Bonus Scheme for people working past pension age. Audience guide: 55-64 years. 6.00pm Tuesday 17th February at the Southern Cross Club Woden, 92 Corinna St, Phillip

Understanding Retirement Income Streams

Income stream types –in particular account based income streams. How they work, advantages & disadvantages, Centrelink assessment, comparison of investment options, getting the mix right, securing your future. Audience guide: 55-64 years. 6.00pm Wednesday 18th February at the Southern Cross Club Woden, 92 Corinna St, Phillip

Understanding Your Pension

Explains how your pension is assessed, the effect of income and assets, rates, concessions and much more. Discusses your rights and obligations. Audience guide: 65+ years. 2.00pm Tuesday 17th March at Pilgrim House, 69 Northbourne Ave, Canberra City

Accommodation Options in Retirement

Explores the options for accommodation in retirement including: staying in the family home, granny flat rules, moving into something smaller, retirement villages, aged care options. Audience guide: 65+ years. 2.00pm Wednesday 18th March at Pilgrim House, 69 Northbourne Ave, Canberra City

Retirement Reality and Investment Choices

Looks at retirement planning issues, investment options, maximising income and use of superannuation products, growth investments, "How much is enough?"; ends with a simple plan for saving for retirement. Audience guide: all ages. 6.00pm Wednesday 1st April 2009 at the Southern Cross Club Woden, 92 Corinna St, Phillip

Mental Health Carers Representation Workshops & Forums

Workshops

Mental Health ACT has funded Carers ACT to offer support, information and training to Carers of a person with mental illness who already participate in representation activities, or those who would like to get involved in representation. Carer representation can include:

- Becoming a member of a committee or board or advisory council
- Attending a forum or meeting
- Having your say at a focus group
- Joining an online discussion forum or an email network

Carers ACT will also be working to communicate information on key issues from representation work to the wider community of Carers looking after people with mental illness. The training workshops for Carers of a person with mental illness listed below are a part of this project. Carers may wish to enrol in all five workshops or just register for those they believe would be most useful for them personally. You do not need to commit to becoming a representative to undertake the training. The workshops will be facilitated by Jill Pierce, the Carers ACT education and training co-ordinator. Similar workshops will be offered for the second half of the year on the southside of Canberra.

If you would like to know more about the Mental Health Carer Representation Program, please call Margaret Wooldridge at Carers ACT on (02) 6296 9900 or email margaretw@carersact.asn.au

Mental Health Carer Representation - What's it all about? Is it for me?

This is an introductory session for Carers of a person with mental illness who are interested in finding out more about carer representation, possible roles for a representative, and how it may impact on their lives. There will be opportunities to discuss issues, and hear from Carers who are already undertaking a representative role. There will also be a speaker from Mental Health ACT who will discuss the roles and expectations of carer representatives on the various committees and working parties within Mental Health ACT.

WHEN: 6pm to 9pm Monday 2nd March

WHERE: Majura Community Centre, Rosevear Place, Dickson

CONTACT: 6296 9900 to register

COST: Free for family Carers. Refreshments provided.

Effective Communication

This workshop aims to describe useful models of communication, develop active listening skills, discuss what helps and what hinders effective communication and investigate ways to give and receive feedback.

WHEN: 6pm - 9pm Monday 16th March

WHERE: Majura Community Centre, Functions Room, Rosevear Place, Dickson

CONTACT: 6296 9900 to register

COST: Free for family Carers. Refreshments provided.

Media Training

This 3 hour workshop is designed specifically for caring families of a person with mental illness. Learn practical techniques and tips in talking confidently to the media. Workshop great key messages to use to reduce stigma around mental illness when communicating with the media. Learn how to focus on getting your message through and how to avoid getting trapped by difficult questions from journalists. Learn the best ways to handle interviews for TV, Radio and Press and how to tackle any potential stigma.

WHEN: Monday, 6pm – 9pm 23rd March

WHERE: Majura Community Centre, Functions Room, Rosevear Place, Dickson

CONTACT: 6296 9900 to register

COST: Free for family Carers. Refreshments provided.

Becoming Assertive / Speaking up

This workshop builds on the skills learnt in Effective Communication. It aims to develop assertive skills and the ability to judge when to use these skills. Participants will be able to practice these skills in a non-threatening environment.

WHEN: 6pm - 9pm Monday, 30th March

WHERE: Majura Community Centre, Functions Room, Rosevear Place, Dickson

CONTACT: 6296 9900 to register

COST: Free for family Carers. Refreshments provided.

Mental Health Carers Representation Workshops & Forums

Committees and how they work

The aim of this workshop is to assist participants to understand the role and purpose of a committee, the different roles on a Committee, and ways committees work to achieve their goals.

WHEN: 6pm – 9pm Monday, 6th April

WHERE: Majura Community Centre, Functions Room, Rosevear Place, Dickson

CONTACT: 6296 9900 to register

COST: Free for family Carers. Refreshments provided.

Please note that there is no cost for participation in either forum and morning tea will be provided. Some free parking is available at both venues.

RSVP is essential as each group is limited to 12 people. Please contact Lindy at Carers ACT on 62960 9900 to register your attendance.

Additional sessions may be offered if demand is sufficient.

If you would like to know more about the Mental Health Carer Representation Program, please call Margaret Wooldridge at Carers ACT on 6296 9900 or email: margaretw@carersact.asn.au

Discussion Forums

As a direct result of the initial information forum on Mental Health Carer Representation held in November 2008, Carers ACT will now continue their commitment to consulting on Carer concerns by hosting focus groups for people caring for someone with a mental illness. These forums will examine the following issues:

Topic 1: Supported Accommodation for Persons with a Mental Illness

Thursday 19th March 2009. 9:30am – 12:30pm

Majura Functions Room, Rosevear Place, Dickson.

Topic 2: Carer Inclusion in Treating Team for Persons with a Mental Illness

Thursday 14th May 2009. 9:30am – 12:30pm

Meeting Room 2, Weston Creek Community Centre, Coolamon Court, Weston

Watch this space ... Young Carers of Persons with Mental Illness

The Mental Health Carer Representation Program will be hosting a forum for Young Carers aged between 12 and 25 who are providing care for someone with a mental illness. We want to hear about what matters to you, what helps and what needs to be fixed. Get involved and have some fun too! The forum will be held on Saturday 4th April 2009 at a venue to be confirmed. Please contact Margaret or Natalie on 6296 9900 for more details.

Would you like your voice to be heard on developing the 4th National Mental Health Plan? Please ring Margaret on 6296 9900 for details on planned consultations with Carers and Consumers to be held shortly in the ACT.

Mental Health Carer Hospital Experience Research

Do you look after a friend, family member or neighbour with a Mental Illness?

Do you support this person in their day to day living?

Has the person you care for ever been admitted to an in-patient facility in Canberra?

If so, would you like to take part in research into your experience?

Have a say on how it felt to have your loved-one hospitalised, how you felt while they were in care and what happened during the admission and discharge process.

For further information contact Denise Burton on 6230 7629 at the Mental Health Foundation ACT

All information and contact will be treated as private and confidential.

Building the Future with Family Carers

National Conference on Caring - 9th & 10th March 2009

A National Conference to develop and exchange ideas and practice that will enhance carers' health, well-being, financial security and choices – now and into the future.

Join host, Richard Fidler – writer, performer and ABC Radio presenter – and a range of speakers to explore:

Innovations in Carer Support

- Enhancing employment opportunities and financial security for carers
- Carer Legislation: What are the benefits?
- Caring as a shared responsibility between government, services, business, families and the community.

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

- Caroline Waters, Director of People and Policy for BT (British Telecom) Group. Currently she is Co-Chair of the UK Prime Minister's National Strategy for Carers in Employment Task Force and Chair of Employers for Carers – a group of major employers, employers' organisations and Government agencies who promote the business benefits of supporting working carers and influence employment policy and practice to create a culture which supports carers

in and into work.

- Professor Luke Clements is a UK solicitor who specialises in human rights proceedings on behalf of socially excluded groups, including disabled people and carers. He helped to draft and pilot through Parliament the Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 and the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004.



The conference will also showcase 18 Innovative Carer Support Programs and ideas from across the nation.

The Conference will be held on 9th and 10th March at the Royal Pines Resort on the Gold Coast. For further information on the conference, including a preliminary program, visit: www.astmanagement.com.au/Carers9

HOW TO REGISTER:

Register online, download the Registration Form from the website or request a Registration Form from the Conference Organiser.

QUESTIONS?

For any questions contact the Conference Organiser on 07 5528 2501 or carers9@astmanagement.com.au

Carers ACT to Sponsor Two Carer Delegates for National Conference on Caring

This sponsorship includes conference registration, travel and basic accommodation. If you are a Carer and would like to apply for one of the sponsored places, please make your application, including your name, contact details and 50 words or less detailing why you would like to attend the conference, to: Dee McGrath, CEO, Carers ACT, 5/54 Benjamin Way Belconnen, or email to carers@carersact.asn.au.

Applications close at 5pm on Monday 16th February. The Carers ACT Board of Directors will select two Carers to receive this subsidy from the applicants and Carers ACT will make all of the bookings and arrangements for the two people selected. Successful applicants will be informed by 5pm on Friday 20th February. Applicants should be available for travel from 8th to 11th March.

If you would like more information, please call: 6296 9900.

New Community Liaison Role

Jess Aan moves into a new challenge at Carers ACT



After managing the Carer Programs team for some time, Jess Aan has taken up a new position at Carers ACT as the new Community Liaison Coordinator.

Within this role, Jess will be focused on developing a stronger, more effective and seamless service system for caring

families in the ACT. Specifically, she will be working on promoting Carelink, engaging the community and health sectors with Carers ACT and our services, and ensuring that Carers ACT staff members are actively

accessing support for Carers from relevant external services.

Ultimately, the goals for this position over the next few years are:

- to ensure that Carers ACT has a consistent approach to internal and external referral pathways for caring families;
- to expand our engagement with opinion leaders and decision makers in the community sector; and
- to build on Carers ACT's reputation as the expert voice with and for Carers, by engaging with key community and health care partnerships.

Jess is looking forward to the role and to ensuring better service provision for Carers throughout the ACT.

Caregiver's Bill of Rights

by Jo Horne, Author of *Caregiving: Helping an Ageing Loved One*

I have the right... to take care of myself. This is not an act of selfishness. It will give me the capability of taking better care of my relative.

I have the right... to seek help from others even though my relatives may object. I recognize the limits of my own endurance and strength.

I have the right... to maintain facets of my own life that do not include the person I care for, just as I would if he or she were healthy. I know that I do everything that I reasonably can for this person, and I have the right to do some things just for myself.

I have the right... to get angry, be depressed, and express other difficult feelings occasionally.

I have the right... to reject any attempts by my relative (either conscious or unconscious) to manipulate me through guilt and/or depression.

I have the right... to receive consideration, affection, forgiveness, and acceptance from my loved one for what I do, for as long as I offer these qualities in return.

I have the right... to take pride in what I am accomplishing and to applaud the courage it has sometimes taken to meet the needs of my relative.

I have the right... to protect my individuality and my right to make a life for myself that will sustain me in the time when my relative no longer needs my full-time help.

I have the right... to expect and demand that as new strides are made in finding resources to aid physically and mentally impaired persons in our country, similar strides will be made towards aiding and supporting caregivers.

Young Carers Study

Experiences of young people living with a family member who has an alcohol or other drug issue:

A summary of the report by Debbie Noble-Carr, Tim Moore and Morag McArthur of the Institute of Child Protection Studies, ACU National

Over the past twenty years increased attention in Australia has focused on the needs and experiences of children and young people living in families affected by alcohol or other drug (AOD) use. At the same time there has been a growing interest in the experiences of young people who assume care responsibilities for a family member who needs assistance due to an illness, disability or chronic condition. Although the gaze of both these groups has rested, at some stage, upon those young people who assume caring responsibilities for a parent with an AOD issue, there has been no specific research and limited dialogue about how these young people might best be considered and how their needs and those of their families might best be responded to within the current policy and practice environment.

In fact, a divergence of view has developed. The alcohol and other drug literature has primarily focused on the negative impacts of living in a family affected by parental use and has emphasized issues of abuse and neglect. This camp has generally conceptualized these young people as passive victims and has asserted the need

to protect children, often calling for assertive intervention. The young carer literature, on the other hand, has seen young people as active players and has generally understated the risks associated within the family context. Instead, they have focused primarily on the nature and impact of the child's caring role and have therefore called for supports that acknowledge and affirm the child's ability to care, whilst reducing any negative impacts that may arise.

It would appear that neither camp has been able, then, to fully capture the lived experience of these young people or to provide responsive strategies to overcome the myriad of challenges that they face. Instead, young people have remained somewhere in the middle – often unwilling to be conceptualized in either way and concerned about the ramifications that identifying as being in need might have on them and their families. This research project, funded by the ACT Government through its Carers Recognition Grants project and conducted by the Institute of Child Protection Studies with support from Anglicare Canberra-Goulburn aimed to redress this situation by exploring the question: **What are the specific needs of children who have a parent with an alcohol or other drug issues and how are these similar or different to other children with care responsibilities?**

In exploring this question, the project aimed to grasp the implications for the range of services that might come into contact with these families (including young carer, AOD, family support and care and protection programs) and the way that supports might be provided.

Nature of the study

This project, conducted in 2008,

engaged children and young people directly in the research process. Adopting an ethical and child-centred approach, the research team provided young people an opportunity to talk about their experiences in one-on-one interviews that were developed in consultation with a young people's reference group who also helped the team understand emerging themes and draw out policy and practice implications.

The project drew on the existing young carer and alcohol and other drug literature which highlighted the vulnerability of these children and young people and the ways that their family and caring situation affected their health, wellbeing, education, social inclusion and future life opportunities.

The nature of the sample

15 young people aged between 11 and 17 years of age participated in the study, 13 of whom currently or previously cared for a parent with an AOD issue with the remaining two caring for an older sibling. Parents used a range of drugs including marijuana, heroin, ice and other illicit and prescription drugs and alcohol.

Nature and experiences of care

Young people lived in families which were marked by complexity and chaos. Although significant, young people's caring responsibilities were but one of a number of intersecting and compounding factors such as poverty, social isolation, violence and family conflict which affected their health and wellbeing, their participation in education, social activities and community life and the relationships they had with parents, siblings and other family members.

Although most young people did not identify with the term 'young carer', each assumed significant care responsibilities for their fam-

ily members. Young people had cared for a significant amount of time over a significant number of years, with most being responsible for providing financial support, taking on household tasks, ensuring the safety of their parent, supervising and supporting their siblings, providing emotional support and personal care. The nature and extent of their caring responsibilities were not dissimilar to those of young carers in other studies, although they were more likely to emphasise their monitoring and emotional care responsibilities and their caring role for siblings, ensuring that all members of their family were safe.

Contrary to popular belief, young people's caring was not episodic although the support needs of their parent did change depending on their wellness and level of AOD use. During periods of wellness, young people reported an increased need for supervision and remained hypervigilant.

The impacts of living in a family affected by parental AOD issues

Unlike young carers in previous studies, young people focused primarily on the negative impacts and affects of caring for their family member, primarily in regards to access to and achievement in education; to their own health and wellbeing (including their own depression, stress and anxiety), their safety, their opportunities to participate in the community and in their transitions into adulthood. Young people often felt hopeless about their situation and their futures.

The key need of young people

Young people felt that they needed a trusted adult with whom they could talk, linkages to professional workers and services who could adequately identify and respond to

the raft of issues and challenges that they faced, opportunities to meet and connect with others in a similar situation to themselves, respite from their home situations, practical and housing assistance and support for their family unit (including family mediation and counseling and assistance to help their parent deal with their AOD issue).

These needs are similar to those of young carers more generally but are compounded by their family's social isolation, poverty and disconnection. As a result they may be in need of more urgent and intensive support compared with their other caring peers.

Barriers to support

Although in similar levels of need to other young carers, these young people seemed to face significant challenges in accessing both mainstream, alcohol and other drug and young carer programs and support. This was because: the system failed to adequately assess their problems and needs; because young people did not want to or felt unable to seek support; because services were not accessible; and because past negative experiences made them less likely to seek further assistance. Not identifying with the label "young carer" or being identified by services as such was also a considerable issue.

The targeting of services to either parents or young people and their focus on either AOD or youth issues kept young people and their families from receiving broad, holistic family focused assistance. Young people often believed that only statutory intervention might meet their myriad of needs which points to the fact that other parts of the service system have not promoted or provided alternative supports that could meet their

needs in a less dramatic way earlier in the life of the problem.

Implications for services

Young people need to be able to talk about their issues and be supported (either directly or through referral) regardless of where in the service system they seek assistance. Mainstream youth, carer and alcohol and other drug services must therefore provide young people with opportunities to engage meaningfully with competent and trustworthy staff who can help them in this way. Although they were ambivalent about the need for a specialized service to be developed to respond to their needs, young people did believe that services across the system needed to be more aware of their issues and more responsive to their needs.

Whilst services fail to recognize the complexity of issues facing these young people and their families, appropriate and responsive services cannot be adequately provided. Better recognition of and responses to the major challenges (including but not limited to a young person's caring responsibilities) is therefore required. This will require better integration of services and coordination of supports. Young people and families need for services to adopt a family focused approach which responds to the young person within their family context. This does not necessitate services working directly with the family, but does require them to understand the key challenges and issues that the young person may face within their family context. Where possible, services should attempt to alleviate the challenges that young people face by providing holistic supports particularly, where possible, to the family as a unit.

Preparing For Emergencies

Part 3 of a continuing series

WHAT TO DO IF AN EMERGENCY OCCURS

If an emergency occurs in your presence where life or property is threatened, there are a number of things you can do.

1. Call 000 (or dial 106 through TTY if you have a speech or hearing impairment) and request attendance by emergency services. DO NOT assume others will do this.
2. DO NOT call 000 for information, as the operator will not be able to provide it.
3. Seek reliable information about what is happening and advice from emergency services. This information may be provided:
 - in person by emergency services at the scene
 - via radio or television, or
 - by telephone from call centres set up to advise people about the specific event – telephone numbers will be broadcast over radio and television.
4. Check for injuries. Attend to your own injuries first so you are able to help others. Seek medical assistance then use basic first aid until medical assistance arrives.
5. Ensure that your family and neighbours are safe, especially those who are elderly or disabled or who may not understand English well.
6. Call your out-of-town contact but keep the conversation short to free up the lines for others who need them.
7. You may be advised to stay in your house or to evacuate – in either case, follow the advice given by emergency services as it will be tailored to the circumstances.
8. Should evacuation be advised, remember to take all your prescribed medications (and repeat prescriptions), and your identification, credit and key cards and cash with you.
9. Check for any damage to your home, including

fires and gas leaks, and shut off electricity, gas and water if necessary. In darkness, use a torch to find them - DO NOT light matches or candles or turn on electrical switches.

Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS)

If you hear a wailing siren sound broadcast on radio or television anywhere in Australia, an urgent safety message is about to be made. Stop and listen, then act on the advice given and put your emergency plan into action. Listen to the radio or TV for further messages.

Part 4 in this series in our next newsletter will give advice about what to do when particular types of emergencies occur.

Emergency contacts

Remember to dial 000 for police, fire and ambulance attendance during life or property threatening situations. If you have a hearing or speech impairment, dial 106 through your textphone (TTY) to obtain emergency service attendance. When notifying the emergency services of your location, ensure that you provide the exact street address and the nearest cross roads.

The State Emergency Service contact is **13 25 00**.
Canberra Connect contact is **13 22 81**.

This information is an excerpt from the Preparing for the Unexpected booklet by Emergency Management Australia (EMA). The whole booklet is available online www.ema.gov.au or can be ordered by email from ema@ema.gov.au or by telephoning EMA on 02 6256 4600.



House with disabled access To Let at Broulee

3 bedroom, fully furnished, fully equipped home, one street back from the beach and close to local shops. Bookings required for February and March. Wheelchair ramp is available at the side of the house. Nice, clean, cosy and comfortable - no smokers please. Phone Val Hibberson on 6281 6914 or 02 4471 6886.

PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) for people with disabilities and their families

Helping you to achieve your goals!

Belconnen Community Service (BCS) in association with Disability ACT is offering people with disabilities the opportunity to turn their dreams and aspirations into real and possible futures.

PATH is a planning tool that has helped many individuals to identify the practical steps they need to take to achieve their goals. It is a highly creative and visual process that can involve family, friends and carers. A PATH facilitator would be happy to meet with you to explain the process.

PATH sessions can be conducted in your own home and take approximately 3 hours to complete. Ongoing support in your journey towards your goals is provided by the PATH family network.

If you would like to find out more about the PATH process please contact: Louise Bannister, PATH Coordinator via email: bcs_path@yahoo.com.au or phone Karen Etheredge, Belconnen Community Service on 6264 0200.

This newsletter is funded by Home and Community Care (HACC). On the past 4 issues, the HACC logo was inadvertently omitted from the publication. Carers ACT apologises for this and can confirm that those past issues were funded by HACC also.



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

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NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:

Friday 6 March 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: ___/___/___

DONATIONS GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED I wish to donate: \$10 \$20 \$50 Other _____

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

Please charge to my credit card (min \$10): Bankcard Visa MasterCard Other _____

Card number: _____ Expiry: ___/___

Name on Credit Card: _____ Signed: _____ Date ___/___/___

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