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Message from Cath

David has asked me to take up the role of Manager of Office for Carers (OFC) in 2009.

Most of you would know that Dr David Caudrey is the Executive Director of OFC. His commitment to carers is reflected in the three committees he chairs, namely:

- The SA Carers Reference Group
- The Whole of Government Carers Implementation Group
- The Department for Families & Communities Carers Group

For a number of years I have undertaken various roles as Manager in Office for the Ageing (OFTA), especially in relation to the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program and Community Care Reform. The value and critical nature of the contribution of carers to the community care sector has always been very clear to me. Although there is plenty more to do, we are proud that South Australia has a higher proportion of carers as HACC clients than the national average, and a more comprehensive system of carers support services. It has also been an avenue for me to advocate for carer issues through the community care and Council of Australian Governments reform work. This has included the national Carers Eligibility Needs Assessment project, plus the consideration of respite and carer support in national negotiations around reforming Government roles and responsibilities in aged care and disability services, such as the National Respite for Carers Program.

Responsibility for OFC is an opportunity to focus even more closely on carer issues. It is particularly timely with the Senate Inquiry into Better Support for Carers due to report, and the likelihood that this will lead to national approaches which have not to date been part of Government activity. From the South Australian perspective, it is an exciting time with the current development of our first Whole of Government Strategic Plan for Carers. One focus we would especially like to pursue is the South Australian Strategic Plan target on Work/Life balance and how this may improve the lives of working carers.

Along with managing OFC, I have retained responsibility within OFTA for Community Care Reform and Intergovernment Relations, and also have taken up responsibility for the Department's Volunteers Unit. Whilst the topics are different, many opportunities have already presented for synergies which promote outcomes in all areas, and I expect this will increase over time.

It has been a pleasure to meet with colleagues across the carer sector who I have met and worked with in previous roles, and to meet new stakeholders including in other Government Departments, and DFC employees who are also carers. Most especially, I would like to acknowledge and thank staff of OFC, Marie Farley, Pat Coidan and Michelle Martin, for their immense dedication and contribution to carers. They are a pleasure to work with.



Raw Energy Makeover

The Carer Support and Respite Centre is proud to be celebrating the anniversary of its Young Carer programme. This year, Raw Energy celebrates 10 years of serving Young Carers within the South and East metropolitan areas of Adelaide thanks to funding from the Federal and State Governments.

Raw Energy began as a 40 day field education placement for a Social Science student from the University of South Australia, supporting just 5 Young Carers. The aim was to provide children and adolescent Carers with assured, flexible and meaningful support.

Today, Raw Energy is one of the leading support programs for Young Carers in Australia, currently supporting over 84 Young Carers and their families aged between 5 and 25. The goal is to provide Young Carers with opportunities to develop personal skills, knowledge and relationships that support them to make positive life choices.

Raw Energy now provides a wide range of respite, support and activities such as: outings designed to generate supportive Young Carer relationships, educational workshops aimed at skills development, mentoring from retired Carers, family breaks, domestic assistance, advocacy, and regular camps for Young Carers. They also undertake activities to assist with studies and future job prospects, through in-home tutoring and activities such as driving lessons for people 16 and over.

Raw Energy's successful programme is recognised at a national level as a unique service in Australia. Its influence has included participation in research programmes, conference presentations and providing advice to Government on Young Carer issues and the programme model.

This year Raw Energy will partner with respected organisations *The Smith Family* and *Savings and Loans* to provide young Carers with educational scholarships and support.

An estimated 500 Young Carers have benefited from this unique programme during the last decade and there is much to be proud of and celebrated as Raw Energy enters its 10th year.



Photo from the recent 'makeover day'.

Young Carer comments:

"...at Raw Energy we can just be kids and enjoy ourselves without the pressure of our caring role at home interfering... I am really grateful that this programme exists because without it we would all be lost."

"When I go to Raw Energy there are other kids in the same situation as me. You're not the only one and they all understand how you feel"

"Raw Energy helps me by giving me support and getting me out of the house, having fun so I am less stressed when I get home."

"Raw Energy makes me a better person, helping me understand things better and accept things".

Launch of DFC Connecting Carers team site & Carers Talk blog

In 2007 a morning tea was hosted by the Chief Executive of the Department for Families and Communities (DFC) as part of Carers Week for its employees who were also carers. Of those employees attending, a DFC support group was established to provide peer based support. It soon became apparent that time pressures and geographic location presented barriers to attendance for most. The idea of a team site and blog was therefore considered.

The Office for Carers developed a team site *DFC Connecting Carers* and *Carers Talk* blog which was designed to enable employees who are also carers to connect with each other easily, regardless of their geographic location and to access a range of information from the one source.

The site aims to assist our employees who juggle work and caring responsibilities by supplying information on a range of topics including HR policies, statistics, employee health and wellbeing, topics of interest, upcoming events, announcements and support services relating to carers. It will provide a central and readily accessible space for DFC employees to access this information.

DFC Connecting Carers and *Carers Talk* blog was launched at the Mercure Grosvenor Hotel on the 6th March by David Caudrey, Executive Director, Office for Carers. Joslene Mazel, Chief Executive was unable to attend due to an interstate engagement. David spoke of Joslene's commitment to carers, and particularly her appreciation of the contribution of DFC employees who juggle often very demanding situations at home with their work responsibilities.

The event was well attended and it was pleasing to welcome a number of representatives from other government departments.

Two DFC carers shared their personal experiences, including emotional challenges they face in maintaining both carer and work responsibilities. One of the speakers was a manager to staff who are also carers as well as being a carer herself. It was interesting to hear her experiences in trying to balance supporting colleagues as well as her own caring and management responsibilities.

A live demonstration of the site was provided and Carer tote bags containing the Carers Recognition Act 2005, SA Carers Charter and SA Carers Policy and posters were provided to attendees.

DFC carers are now requesting access to the *Carers Talk* blog. *Carers Talk* allows carers to talk to each other on line to share knowledge, common experiences, and coping strategies as well as a place to network. DFC carers have the option of being anonymous and are able to raise any issues, topic or suggestions with one another.

Office for Carers administrates DFC Connecting Carers team site and Carers Talk blog. We encourage carers to work with us and share information to ensure the site continues to meet carers needs.



Attendees watching the demonstration at the launch

Are you a working carer? A working carer is a person who is in full-time, part-time or casual paid employment who also cares for a relative or friend who is frail, has a disability or a chronic illness.

Launch of DFC Connecting Carers – Mireta Blackmore shared her thoughts as a carer with those attending the launch. We are very pleased to provide her words within this newsletter.

Caring is giving love and attention to people and things that matter to you.

When you care about people you say and do things that help them. When you do a careful job, you give it your best effort. Caring comes from within. It is a sign of love. When you care for someone, you notice how they feel and what they need. Caring is a special way of paying attention.

Working carers is a social phenomenon that's just going to get bigger and bigger.

Today we're not talking about working parents – but all those people who look after their parents, husband or wife or a child or other relatives who have a disability, mental health or other forms of illness, AND have a paid job at the same time.

There are possibly about 1.5 million people in this category in Australia.....and many have pretty tough and exhausting lives. Being a carer is often something people don't plan to do. For many people, caring is a 24 hour job that is emotionally, physically, mentally, socially and financially stressful, especially when we are trying to juggle our work and to meet our carers responsibilities, and also to have a social life for ourselves. Caring can be so demanding that little energy is left to search for assistance or lobby for more support. Yet the estimated million or so carers, save the community and government 33 something billion dollars per year keeping their sick loved one at home.

Home-based care is defined as “the provision of health services by formal and informal caregivers in the home, in order to promote, restore and maintain a person's maximum level of comfort, function and health including carer towards a dignified death. Informal care givers refer to families and that includes us the DFC working carers.

In some cases, the working carer may have to give up their work, or substantially reduce their work activities, in order to care for their loved one. In some cases, the caring task is shared. In most cases, the working carers also suffer health complaints. For the most part providing care is defined in negative terms. A number of working carers point to care provision as a difficult work. Other working carers point to care provision as being demanding and some describe this aspect as being frustrating.



DFC Staff at the launch. (left to right) David Caudrey, Marie Farley, Cath McGee, Susie Rodeghiero-Smith, Mireta Blackmore, Michelle Martin and Pat Coidan.

The main purpose of the DFC Carers site is to provide DFC carers with a quick and easy guide to what is happening regarding carers.

I believe I have developed as a stronger person, with more courage and resourcefulness due to combining my caring role with paid employment. While caring for my loved one is often rewarding, it can also be immensely challenging. I have also grown to love and care more in spite of the difficulty of the task, and no doubt there is also a heavenly reward awaiting me on that day when I meet my Maker.

Thank you

Mireta Blackmore

Office for the Ageing hosts Carer Support Services Forum

Carers may be interested to note that on 18 February 2009, OFTA hosted a HACC funded Carer Support Services Forum at the Rose Harrison Hall, Hackney. Representatives from all the key country and city-based specialist carer support services attended.

Regional Country Health staff from the Riverland represented non HACC funded carer support services that are closely aligned with HACC carer services.

OFTA Service and Program Development staff facilitated the Forum. It was Sue McKinnon's final contribution to her long OFTA carer portfolio role as Sue has moved to other areas of work.

David Caudrey opened the Forum with a speech, *'Caring in Changing Times'* and an accompanying data show. Marie Farley, Office for Carers, spoke to *'Carers – the SA Picture'*. The day included workshopping key topics and networking opportunities.

Attendees appreciated maps of state wide HACC carer services displayed at the Forum. These maps have been compiled by the Office for Carers, through the assistance of DFC Online and Geographic Services, and will soon be available on the Office for Carers website.

OFTA, through its administration of the HACC program, is encouraging carer support services to work towards integrated whole-of region responses to enable maximum benefit to HACC eligible carers.

The focus of HACC carer services continues to be on the priority HACC target groups, especially older carers, who may also be carers of the frail aged, and including ageing carers of adult disabled children.



Attendees at the HACC forum



Regional and metropolitan carer services were represented at the forum and took the opportunity to compare notes and ideas

Common Internet Site for Government (CISfG)

The Common Internet Site for Government (CISfG) is a whole of government internet site that will give people one online place where they can help themselves to our information and services.

The CISfG will be customer focused with information and services that are useful to the general community and service providers, structured and presented in a way that makes it simple and easy to find what they're looking for.

Why have the CISfG?

Across the world people expect organisations to provide information and services that are easy to access. This means governments have to change. Currently South Australia has hundreds of government websites. This is often confusing for customers and costly for Government.

What's happened so far?

The CISfG core team has been established and a plan ("roadmap") has been developed in conjunction with "Gov 3", the United Kingdom based organisation that has successfully established sites in the UK, Croatia and Hong Kong. The core team has developed a pilot site and is planning the first release of the site in June 2009.

Information focusing on the needs of different groups in the community is being developed for the site. To date, this includes information for carers, seniors and people with a disability, as well as information on transport, training and water and the environment.

Over time, more and more information about state government services will be brought onto the common internet site so that all South Australian consumers can easily find the information they need.

What does it mean for carers?

Information for carers is being developed. This means South Australian carers and service providers will be able to find information about state government services on one easy to use website. They won't need to know which department provides a service to be able to find it.

As the site is developed there will be opportunities for customers to provide feedback on the site. The CISfG is committed to making sure that the site is continually improved and updated into the future.

Relinquished and Past Carers

Relinquished or past carers are those carers who have ceased their caring role in the community. Commonly, this occurs because the person they cared for has died or entered a residential facility. The role change from carer to relinquished carer can occur quickly but is an expected part of the caring continuum.

Relinquished carers have often contributed to the care recipient's life at a cost to their own social, emotional, financial and physical wellbeing. The solitary and isolating nature which can be that of the care-giver has often resulted in loss of friendships and connection to local community with an accompanying sense of isolation and loneliness.

At the point of the role changing for the relinquishing carer Commonwealth funded benefits and allowances are revoked. Carers can then be confronted with reduced incomes and unemployment. Many carers leave the workplace to undertake the caring role and subsequently lack skills and/or confidence to re-enter the workforce. There is no formal support system available to help them adjust and reconnect with their community.

The end of the caring role can result in an abrupt loss of access to the social supports and connections associated with their care-giving role. Reactions of grief and loss are likely to follow as a result of both the loss of the cared for person and also the systems of carer support which may have sustained them for many years.

In situations where care recipients move into residential aged care facilities, the carer may still be providing support, care and advocacy, but this is often unrecognised.

From a policy perspective, the relinquished or past carer is no longer eligible for either State or Commonwealth funded services for carers.

In the absence of more specific and appropriate service and system responses relinquished and past carers have long sought support from carer support services. These services will have responded to the carers' needs through their carer journey often over many years and it is likely carers would again turn to the carer service as they face this significant transition from caring. Support from these services through the carer journey has established strong relationships with the carer services and the carers they have met along the way.

HACC funded services are funded to provide support to carers of frail aged and adult younger people with disabilities in the community. Many of these services however have attempted to respond to the ever present need of relinquished and past carers through provision of self help groups or volunteer run programs to support and assist carers to connect to other options. This support also provides a preventative focus of reducing social isolation. These programs are not cost-neutral however, with costs incurred in organising the program and volunteers; transport; and follow up issues with group members.

The Office for Carers continues to be concerned about relinquished and past carers. We have a commitment to understanding the issues more fully so that both emotional and practical support can be offered in the future. We will keep you up to date in upcoming newsletters with developments on this important issue.

The Latest Research on Young Carers: Interview with Saul Becker

Carers SA was pleased to host Professor Saul Becker at a Special Event in December 2008 when he was on his way home after speaking at the Bring it! Young Carers Forum.

Saul is the Head of the School of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Nottingham, England. He is also the Director of the new global research and information network Young Carers International Research & Evaluation.

Saul has been involved in research, teaching, writing and policy work for young Carers for 16 years. Carers SA asked Saul to comment on recent work.

Recent projects

There has been a study of young adult Carers 16-24, a national evaluation of two young Carers' grants programs and the development of outcome measurement tools on the caring responsibilities and the positive and negative outcomes of caring on young Carers.

Directions for research

There are some new studies which look at the extent of caring, the experiences and needs of young Carers and what support they require. There is an emerging interest around 'resilience' and what factors help build it. There is a growing need to evaluate the services and interventions.

Recent findings

Carers aged 18-24 in the UK, around a quarter of a million Carers, are a large and invisible group. Many find their caring roles difficult and receive little, if any, support. Indeed, young Carers *under* 18 probably have more recognition as a group than these young adult Carers. We need to do something about that.

How have young Carers been involved?

Young Carers are involved in research steering groups. It is a privilege to have direct contact with young Carers and for them to trust me with their stories and accounts. This is the best part of being a researcher. They are stories which need to be heard.

What are programs that are effective?

Projects which aim to support whole families, which help and support young Carers at particularly difficult phases or 'transitions' in their lives and which help to reduce young Carers' caring responsibilities in the home are showing signs of promoting young Carer well-being, social inclusion, participation, health and development.



Photo of Saul Becker and friends

Saul Becker Special Event December 2008: L-R: young Carer Ambassadors Ricci and Tash, Saul Becker, Young Carer Ambassador Sarah, Program Manager Kate Preiss, Young Carer Ambassador William

For more information and latest research findings go to www.SaulBecker.co.uk

For more information on young carers in South Australia call Carers SA on

8291 5600 or email info@carers-sa.asn.au

Emergency Heatwave Response

Staff from the Office for Carers were very pleased to participate in the recent Emergency Heatwave Response which monitored the welfare of people at risk during the recent heatwave. The response was a collaborative partnership between the Department for Families and Communities and Red Cross.

The response incorporated a telephone contact service that enabled more than 15,000 calls to be made during the ten-days to older people without support, people who are socially and/or geographically isolated, carers, people from low income backgrounds, individuals with chronic health needs, people who had limited English and people with no means of transport.

Carers were found to be in particular need of support.

The Red Cross Telecross Service was expanded to support the increased number of people who requested regular daily phone calls to check on their welfare during the extreme heat.

A significant number of examples have been provided to demonstrate the importance of the Emergency Heatwave Response in identifying and responding to people who were either in need of assistance or extremely anxious during the heatwave.



DFC staff assisting at Red Cross during the heat wave

HACC Funding – Services for Carers

South Australia – is ahead in targeting Home and Community Care (HACC) funding services for carers.

SA, in targeting HACC funding for carer specific services, has been ahead of the other states for some time. By 2006/07, SA had allocated 11% of HACC recurrent funding for carer services compared to the Australian average of 8% of HACC expenditure accessed by carers.

In SA in 2007-08, HACC Round 23, a total of \$15.5 million was allocated to specific services for carers:

- respite care (\$9.8 million)
- counselling/support, information & advocacy for carers (\$5.7 million)

This totalled 11.4% of SA HACC funding.

During this period (2007-08), 69% of carers receiving HACC services lived with the person they were caring for.

In SA, in 2008 -09, under HACC Round 24 (HACC Rounds being the distribution of growth funding), carers were allocated more than \$1 million, for expansion of existing projects and to fund new projects. \$595,000 was approved for expansion funding with the balance on new services, including \$75,000 for a state-wide Aboriginal Carer Needs Analysis and \$90,000 for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) projects and services.

After community consultation and learning gained from 2008, OFTA is currently finalising the funding priorities for HACC Funding Round 25.

It is important to remember that we are in the second year of the Home and Community Care, South Australia, Triennial Plan 2008- 09 to 2010-11. A copy of the Triennial Plan is available on the Office for the Ageing website, www.ageing.sa.gov.au under 'Home and Community Care Program'.

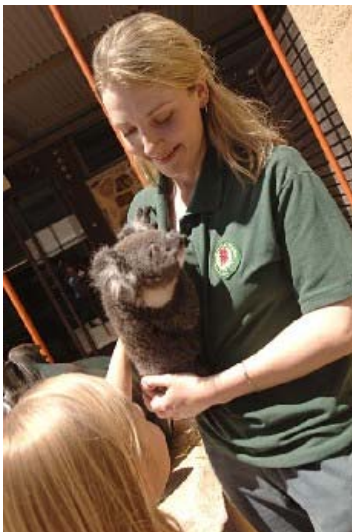
Grab your Companion Card and connect with nature – for free!

People with a disability who are eligible to receive a Companion Card can now visit some of South Australia's best loved nature attractions accompanied by a carer who can enter free of charge, thanks to the Department for Environment and Heritages affiliation with the South Australian Companion Card Scheme.

Designed to improve social and recreation opportunities, the program admits a carer accompanying a card holder, at no extra cost, to a range of activities in parks and gardens around the state.

The exciting initiative formalises the department's long-term support for fair ticketing and encourages people with disabilities, who require a companion, to experience the best of nature in South Australia.

There's so much to see and do! Get up close to native animals at Cleland Wildlife Park, marvel at magnificent Wilpena Pound, see Australian Sea-lions bask at Seal Bay or journey to the limestone underworld at Naracoorte Caves National Park.



Companions of card holders receive free access when entering or taking tours at these great sites, managed by the department:

- **Bicentennial Conservatory**
(Adelaide Botanic Gardens)
- **Cleland Wildlife Park**
(Adelaide Hills)
- **Naracoorte Caves National Park**
(Limestone Coast)
- **Tantanoola Caves Conservation Park**
(Limestone Coast)
- **Old Wilpena Station**
(Flinders Ranges National Park)
- **Seal Bay Conservation Park**
(Kangaroo Island)
- **Kelly Hill Caves Conservation Park**
(Kangaroo Island)
- **Cape Willoughby Lightstation**
(Kangaroo Island)
- **Cape Borda Lightstation**
(Kangaroo Island)
- **Flinders Chase National Park**
(Kangaroo Island)

Sites included in the Companion Card Program charge on a per person basis and would otherwise require an additional fee for visiting carers.

The department's FREE National Parks guide, available from www.parks.sa.gov.au is packed with useful information for planning your next visit. It details location and accessibility for all parks and specifies where disabled toilet facilities are available.

Useful Links

SA Companion Card

Companion Card is a card issued to people with a permanent disability who require attendant care support which allows a companion to enter free of charge to participating venues and activities.

<http://www.sa.companioncard.asn.au/>

National Conference on Caring 2009

2009 National Conference on Caring – Building the Future with Family Carers – was held on the 9th and 10th of March 2009 at Royal Pines Resort on the Gold Coast.

Selected conference presentation papers available for download:

<http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/?/qld/article/view/775>

Speech at conference by Hon Jenny Macklin MP

http://www.jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/jennymacklin.nsf/content/caring_conference_9mar2009.htm

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Young Carers in Global Context - SPRC Workshop, 2 December 2008 (Page 10-12)

A Workshop titled *Young Carers in Global Context* was held in December 2008 to disseminate findings from three SPRC projects concerned with understanding the circumstances and needs of young carers – children and young people who are informal carers for people with disability or chronic illness.

Chaired by Professor Deborah Brennan, the workshop comprised three papers and a cross-sectoral panel of discussants:

<http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/nl/NL101.pdf>

Got something you would like to contribute?

If you have any related stories or events that you would like published in the Office for Carers newsletter, please contact Michelle Martin on (08) 8207 0424 or e-mail michelle.martin@dfc.sa.gov.au with details.

Know someone who might be interested in receiving this newsletter?

If you know of anyone or any organisation who would like to receive this newsletter, please encourage them to contact michelle.martin@dfc.sa.gov.au to have their details added to our mailing list.