

Newsletter

Winter Edition: 2008

→ **A Note from Jillian**



Welcome to the third edition of the Office for Carers Newsletter.

You may have noticed this edition is a little later getting to you. We have decided to send our Newsletter out every season rather than bi-monthly – this is our Winter edition.

First and foremost a very warm welcome to Dr. David Caudrey who has joined Office for the Ageing as Executive Director. After 8 years as Director, Office for Disability and Client Services and with over 30 years involvement in the disability field he is excited to start in his new role as Executive Director, Office for the Ageing.

These past couple of months have seen increased interest in supporting carers, most significantly the Commonwealth House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family announced an "Inquiry into better support for carers". There has been a phenomenal response to this inquiry from around Australia and this has included submissions from individual carers or people affected by caring, from carer support services and from governments wishing to put their perspective. We watch with interest the work of this committee and look forward to reading their report and recommendations.

Since our last newsletter there have been lots of staffing changes here at the Office for Carers. Rob Martin has left to work with Red Cross Australia. Our admin person, Jill Horn won another position and Suzie Taylor has filled her spot. Despite these changes the work of this Office has continued to grow and there is still much to be done. We are delighted to have Rosemary Martin join us in recent weeks. Rosemary will be with us for 3 months working on a number of policy and research topics.

Many of you will know Sue McKinnon and I have been working closely with the carer support services to refine the retreats program. For those of you unfamiliar with this program, it provides an opportunity for carers to take an overnight break away from caring. This program is very valuable for carers and we are confident these changes will make retreats even more valuable for carers.

And finally this will be my last newsletter. I am leaving the Office for Carers to take up a position with a non government agency. I am leaving the office in the very skilled and able hands of Marie Farley.

It has been a delight to meet so many of you and I applaud your commitment to supporting carers in all that you do.

I look forward to hearing of many more great achievements for carers in the future.

Jillian Paul



Financial Assistance for Continence Support

Financial assistance for continence aides has been made available to anyone over the age of 5. This has positive implications for South Australian carers.

The Commonwealth Government's Continence Assistance Scheme (CAS) has been doubled, with eligible applicants able to claim up to \$470 per annum towards the cost of continence products.

The increased funding for this scheme is expected to benefit approximately 40,000 Australians.

Many of the carers that the Office for Carers have spoken with over the past 12 months have voiced concern over the expense associated with purchasing continence aides, and the fact that the scheme had only applied to people aged 16 to 64.

The changes to the Continence Assistance Scheme should be of great benefit to those people eligible to apply for the subsidies.

Further information on the CAS is available on the Commonwealth Department of Health website at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publications.nsf/Content/mr-yr07-ss-san011.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2007&mth=2>

Respite, Recreation and Revitalisation at the City of Burnside

The 3Rs (Respite, Recreation and Revitalisation) program is a Home and Community Care (HACC) funded community-based activities program operating across the eastern region of Adelaide.

3Rs is founded on a partnership of Councils and community based agencies working collaboratively to assist participants to reintegrate into their community. There are currently Programs running at Burnside, Campbelltown, Payneham and Enfield.

Activities offered are diverse and reflect the choices the participants have made to meet their outcomes - this is where 3Rs differs from other chat groups and friendship clubs.

For example, if a participant wanted to learn how to use an ATM machine this would be built into the program, it's all about what the participants want to achieve. The 3Rs philosophy is to help participants maintain or learn skills that will give them confidence to achieve their goals and remain active in their community.

Currently there are 7 groups that cater for frail aged people, people with memory loss (early stage), socially isolated people over 65, younger people with an acquired brain injury and older African women and their carers (participants do not necessarily have to have a carer to join). The groups are kept small to allow for more individual attention and are facilitated by 2 or 3 key workers with specialised skills.

The groups set their activities together with the help of the key workers. Activities can include card games, bus outings, gentle exercises, board games, cooking, guest speakers and anything else the participants can come up with!

Most of all they have a lot of fun while participating in meaningful activities and giving their carers a well deserved break at the same time.

If you would like any further information on the 3Rs Program, please contact Amanda Altman, 3Rs Program Coordinator on 8366 4107.



Participants in the 3R's program.

Chinese 'Grey Power'

Chinese Welfare Services promotes positive ageing. The project 'Learning Cross Culturally' is to arouse the Chinese community to recognise the importance of being active and involved in lifelong learning.

Growing old is everyone's future. Learning Cross Culturally recruits senior Australian Chinese who came from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines.

These seniors are interested in Chinese cultural activities. They join a team according to their interest, such as singing, exercise, painting, playing a musical instrument, dancing, etc. Free training is given weekly. These seniors also form the Chinese Grey Power. This is a performance group that goes out to the mainstream community such as schools, nursing homes and cultural organisations to perform a cultural workshop, such as Tai Chi, singing, etc.

A Cultural Awareness Variety Show will conclude in June 2008. Once again, the Chinese Grey Power show-cases their talent and skills.

There are more meanings behind the scene. The project provides a free learning opportunity for older people to develop their skills, social responsibility and fellowship necessary to create positive change.

Chinese Grey Power officially formed on November 7, 2007. So far they have recruited 35 members and 14 volunteers with 8 instructors included. Members join the Calligraphy & Ink Painting class, Cantonese Singing class, Cooking class, Dance class, Mandarin Singing class, Qi Gong class and Tai Chi class. Craft class and Musical Instrument class will be organised soon.

Even before the formation, Chinese Grey Power has performed Qi Gong, Singing and Tai Chi in different events, such as Moon festival, and the AGM of Chinese Welfare Services.

This project is funded by the Department for Families and Communities. For more information on this program please contact Peony Brown, Chinese Welfare Services of SA Inc on 82122988.



A 'Grey Power' participant in Calligraphy classes.

CALD News

The "Responding to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Carers" Report was launched, together with translated summaries, at the Goodwood Community Centre on Monday 14th July 2008. This report was commissioned by the Office for the Ageing (OFTA) when a lack of carer support services within the different CALD communities was identified. The Report has provided the basis for funding allocations for CALD Carers for the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 HACC Funding Rounds. For further information, please contact the team leader of the Multicultural Team in OFTA, Inga Perkons-Grauze on 8207 0522.

Commonwealth submission

Office for Carers is pleased to announce that we have provided a submission into the Commonwealth Government Inquiry into Better Support For Carers.

There was a public hearing in Adelaide on Wednesday 13 August 2008. For further information on this submission and reports please go to <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fchy/carers/index.htm>

DFC Carer Support Group

In October 2007 Sue Vardon, our Chief Executive, hosted a morning tea for employees who are carers to thank them for their commitment and contributions to both the Department and the persons they care for. From this event an internal support group was formed to offer peer based support to each other and to advise the Department of the issues most affecting employees who are carers.

This group will be highly valuable to the Office for Carers and DFC as a source of first hand information on how our work environment can be enhanced to support carers and their work life responsibilities.

Reconciliation Celebrated

The Office for Carers and the Office for the Ageing celebrated the future of reconciliation in Australia at an afternoon tea on the afternoon of the Prime Minister's historic apology to the Indigenous people of Australia.

At 3:00 pm on Wednesday 13 February 2008, staff from both Offices joined to reflect on the historic address and its implications for all Australians.

It was also an opportunity to reflect on the importance of reconciliation efforts in the course of the work that we do within the community care sector in South Australia.

Office for the Ageing Executive Director, Anne Gale, donned her guitar and broke into song to celebrate the occasion, reminding everyone that saying 'sorry' is much more than a word; it is a course of action which we should all be pursuing.



Anne leading OFTA and OFC staff in song.

Australia Day Awards

Staff from the Office for the Ageing and the Office for Carers were recognised at a recent Australia Day Awards ceremony.

The ceremony sought to recognise achievements of public sector employees in various areas.

Marie Farley, Chief Project Officer in the Office for Carers received an Innovation Award for her valuable work around carer's issues over the past two years.
Congratulations Marie!



Australia Day Award Winners left to right, Jacqui Connelly, Toni Woehlert, Caroline Fogden, Marie Farley, Hon. Jay Weatherill Minister for Families and Communities, Rosie Mangan and Lisette Claridge

Report on Carer Health and Wellbeing released

A report completed by the South Australian Department of Health confirms long held understandings of the impact of caring on carer health and wellbeing.

Released on 11 February 2008, the report is a product of a 10 year epidemiological analysis from 1994 to 2004 on comparative carer health.

The report confirms that overall health and wellbeing of carers is comparatively lower than non carers, and that carers tend to suffer chronic diseases more than non carers.

A copy of the report can be obtained at <http://www.health.sa.gov.au/pros/portals/0/Carers%20Report%202007.pdf>

Report from AIFS

A new report from the Australian Institute of Family Studies "The Nature and Impact of Caring for Family Members with a Disability in Australia" is well worth a look. Please refer to link as attached.

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/resreport16/main.html>

Office for Carers visits Ceduna

In February 2008, Marie Farley and Rob Martin of the Office for Carers facilitated a **Recognising and Supporting Carers** workshop in Ceduna.

Participants were drawn from the Ceduna District Health Service and the Ceduna Kooniba Aboriginal Health Service.

The session was a great opportunity for Marie and Rob to gain some insight into the dynamic of health provision to both Indigenous and non Indigenous people in the Ceduna / Kooniba area, and to understand the ways in which carers are supported by the services.

Rob and Marie also met with some carers to discuss the key issues affecting them in their caring role, particularly given the remote area in which they live.



Views from the workshop venue in Ceduna

Many of the issues that carers in Ceduna face appear to be the same as carers in other remote and regional areas.

These include a lack of access to appropriate respite services, issues around transport and accommodation for specialist appointments in Adelaide and other regional centres, and lack of information on the range of carer support available to them.

Participants in the workshop were given an opportunity to brainstorm innovative ways of supporting carers in their region, with staff from the two health services agreeing on the value of further collaboration to raise the profile of carers and the work they do.

Office for Carers visits Coober Pedy

Also in February, Rob Martin and Marie Farley visited Coober Pedy to facilitate a "Recognising and Supporting Carers" workshop. The workshop provided an opportunity for participants to consider ways they might support carers in line with the Carers Charter and Carers Recognition Act. It also enabled time out to focus on the issues for carers particularly in light of the unique circumstances of the town's remote location and demography.



Attendees at workshop

We met separately with Carers to discuss issues they face and to provide information about the Carers Recognition Act and the directions being taken by the Office for Carers. While consultation with carers has shown that many issues are similar across the state, Coober Pedy's uniqueness and isolation highlight a number of specific issues.

There are a range of difficulties for carers travelling with the cared for person to access specialist medical treatment. Demographics of younger people moving away to seek employment and other experiences, an ageing population which means carers are getting older, and high numbers of single people living in Coober Pedy and increased difficulty in providing care to those in need. There is high reliance on community members to support each other: Many neighbours are taking on significant caring roles. Issues discussed by the carers present will be conveyed to relevant areas of Government.

This visit to Coober Pedy provided valuable insight to the Office for Carers. It represented the final of 15 workshops which have been conducted by the Office for Carers across SA in 2007 /08.



The view above ground

Re-developing the Carer Retreat Program

For the past 13 years, the Carers Association of SA have auspiced this program. Funded by HACC (Home and Community Care) through OFTA (Office for the Ageing) this program has been a very important and essential part of carer wellbeing.



Office for Carers meeting with Carer Support Services to re-develop the Retreats Program

Continuously improving our services is very important to government and so the Retreat Program has been analysed to help us understand and improve the way it is offered to carers.

The Retreat Program commenced on 1 July 2008 and is now offered through local Carer Support Services. This will increase connection between carer services, mainstream services to support carers beyond the current Retreat Program.



Fullarton Park Information Session Attendees

Thirty-eight Retreat Co-ordinators, Agency Staff and Carers attended an information workshop at Fullarton Community Centre on 24 June 2008.

You can contact your local Carer Support Service at the number below if you require any information regarding retreats, or Suzie in Office for Carers:

Suzanne.Taylor@dfc.sa.gov.au or call on 8207 0424.

Carer Link York Peninsula
(08) 8821 2444

Country North City Services / Lower North Region
(08) 8842 1118

Carers Link Barossa – Barossa Region
(08) 8562 4000

South Coast Carers – Fleurieu Region
(08) 8552 7419

Northern Carers Network – Northern Metro
(08) 8284 0388

Carers Support and Respite Centre – South and East Metro
(08) 8379 5777

Carers Association – Western Metro
(08) 8240 2900

Eyre Carers
(08) 8683 4477

South East Carers
(08) 8724 7188

River Murray Mallee
(08) 8584 6855

Northern Country Carers
(08) 8641 1844

Visiting Delegation of UK Members of Parliament

The UK Government is currently reviewing its policy approach to carers, updating the 1999 Prime Minister's strategy. The name of their review is 'The Government's Carers Strategy'.

In the context of this review The Work & Pensions Committee (WPC), a delegation of 8 UK Members of Parliament, led by Terry Rooney MP recently travelled to Sydney and Adelaide. The object of their visit was to learn more about developments at state and federal levels for Australian carers including recognition of carers needs beyond their caring roles and the importance of supporting them into employment.



UK delegation and the Office for the Ageing and Office for Carers representatives at recent meeting

On 14th and 15th May the delegation met with a range of South Australian government and non government representatives including the Office for Carers and Office for The Ageing. Led by Anne Gale, Executive Director Office for the Ageing, information was provided regarding:

- The SA Carers Recognition Act 2005;
- Directions and strategies to improve services and support for carers; and
- The current challenges.

The meeting was highly successful and provided a valuable opportunity to share ideas and approaches.

ARE YOU A WORKING CARER?

ARE YOU EMPLOYED, PLANNING TO RETURN TO EMPLOYMENT OR STUDYING FOR EMPLOYMENT AS WELL AS BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CARE ARRANGEMENTS OF AN ELDERLY LOVED ONE?

THE WORX HOST HOME RESPITE SERVICE AT MASONIC HOMES INCORPORATED MAY BE ABLE TO ASSIST YOU IN YOUR CARING ROLE. (YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE LIVING WITH THE PERSON YOU ARE CARING FOR TO BE ELIGIBLE!).

Respite Service for Employed Carers WORX (Wealth Of Rejuvenating eXperiences)

This service is designed to assist employed carers whose employment may be at risk; carers planning to return to work, or carers planning to enter the work force. The aim is to support carers by offering a day of rejuvenating experiences for the aged person they care for, who may have health issues including dementia and may be isolated.

Each host home has a planned community activity opportunity in the morning. Lunch is provided and the afternoon is spent in the home environment (Host Home) of the qualified worker. Arrangements are tailored to suit individual needs. The respite provides for a maximum of 4 people at a time in each Host Home. Respite is offered for one or two days per week per person, Monday to Friday 9am-5pm. Transport is included.

The WORX Respite Service is an Australian Government Initiative, funded through the National Respite for Carers Program and is open to Carers and Recipients living in the Marion, Holdfast Bay, Unley, Mitcham and Inner-Onkaparinga Council areas. Currently 3 Host Homes are available with a choice of 3 days Monday – Thursday.

Enquires are welcome.

For further information and referrals contact the Coordinator, Heather Garner-Tripodi at Masonic Homes Inc. on 8375 1526.

Got something you would like to contribute?

If you have any stories or events that you would like published in the Office for Carers newsletter, please contact Suzanne Taylor on (08) 8207 0424 or e-mail suzanne.taylor@dfc.sa.gov.au with details of what you would like added.

We are keen for this newsletter to be a mouthpiece for carer's issues, and look forward to hearing from you around how we can include your ideas!

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 suzanne.taylor@dfc.sa.gov.au to have their details added to our mailing list.

Please feel free to circulate this newsletter as widely as you like.

Disclaimer

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These links are provided for information purposes only and are not intended to reflect the opinions of the Office for Carers or its staff.

To contact the Office for Carers, please feel free to call our Administrative Officer on (08) 820 70424.