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## Message from Cath

2009 is flying fast, and this is already the second Office for Carers Newsletter since I joined the office as Manager.

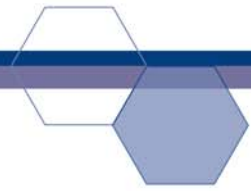


An important event in relation to carers over this period was the report from the Parliamentary Inquiry into better support for carers, *'Who Cares...?'*. This is the most comprehensive piece of work at a national level on carers to date, and the level and breadth of the attention to this topic is most welcome. The report makes 50 recommendations to the Commonwealth Government, and the Office for Carers is looking forward to contributing to initiatives that build on these recommendations and advance recognition and support for carers. Themes include recognition of carers, access to services, employment and education assistance, health and well being.

In light of the Inquiry and the potential it offers for national strategic directions over the coming years, we are focussing on a one year Carers Plan for the Department for Families and Communities (DFC). The contribution from the sector, other Government Departments, and Divisions within the DFC, has been invaluable in the Plan's development.

In addition to Marie Farley, Pat Coidan and Michelle Martin, we have recently welcomed Holli MacKinnon to the Office for Carers. Holli is a Psychology Graduate who is working with us to collate and analyse carers information from a range of data sets, to inform planning and identify need for further research.

On behalf of David Caudrey, Executive Director, and Office for Carers staff, I hope that you find this Newsletter informative. We welcome articles from all interested parties to contribute to the next edition.



## National Inquiry into Better Support for Carers

### The *Who Cares...?* report

has been handed down. It is available at the following link:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fchy/carers/report.htm>

The Inquiry was referred to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth in May 2008. The Committee (chaired by Annette Ellis MP: Member for Canberra) was keen to hear from carers themselves. Of the 1,300 written submissions received, more than 1,200 were from individuals, the majority identifying as past or current carers. Many organisations and individuals from South Australia provided written and verbal submissions.

The Inquiry considered:

- the role and contribution of carers in society and how this should be recognised
- the barriers to social and economic participation for carers, with a particular focus on helping carers to find and/or retain employment;
- the practical measures required to better support carers, including key priorities for action; and
- strategies to assist carers to access the same range of opportunities and choices as the wider community, including strategies to increase the capacity for carers to make choices within their caring roles, transition into and out of caring, and effectively plan for the future

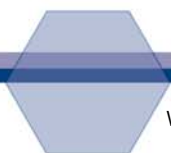
- also inquire into the specific needs of particular groups within the caring population including new carers, younger carers, older carers, Indigenous carers and those with multiple care responsibilities

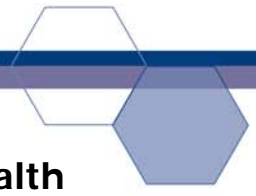
The Report refers to the increased reliance on informal care provided by family and friends. In the absence of adequate support, carers are already in crisis. Demographic and social trends are predicted to result in larger numbers of people requiring care and smaller numbers of people able and willing to provide it.

Pressures on systems of support for carers which have been building over decades are therefore projected to increase.

The Committee has given consideration to diverse options to improve the situation for carers, recommending fundamental and significant reform is required to all the systems which support carers. This means not just to consider financial support but the whole way we deal with carers in society.

The Inquiry is the first national broad consideration of carers and is important in view of the changes and growth in carer numbers and demands upon them. Formal response from the Commonwealth Government is awaited.





## Planning for Carers

The Office for Carers, with other divisions of the Department of Families and Communities (DFC) has been developing a Carers Plan. DFC is one of the six Departments which report annually on progress and achievements relating to the seven Principles of the SA Carers Charter and the Plan will build on this process.

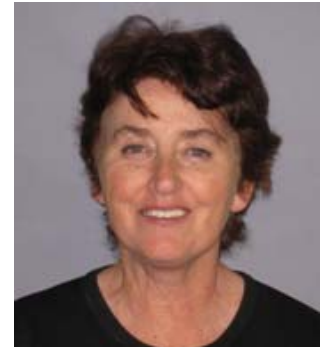
Whilst the annual reporting process has been established and improved since the Office for Carers was established in December 2006, the Plan will provide the connection between the requirement to report and the benefits of including carers in forward thinking and planning processes. The recently released DFC Five Year Strategic Plan 2009 -2013 committed to the development of the DFC Plan for Carers.

Office for Carers meets with representatives from other divisions of DFC on a regular basis. This group has been the conduit between the Office for Carers and divisional input into the Plan. As an organisation as complex and diverse as DFC, many challenges have been presented in ensuring carers are incorporated into our business planning processes and culture at all levels of the organisation.

Given the significant amount of activity regarding carers at a national level with the recent release of the Who Cares.....? Report, it has been decided that an initial one year plan will enable flexibility to incorporate and respond to any outcomes of the Commonwealth governments response to the Report.

## Introducing the Mental Health Unit Carer Consultant

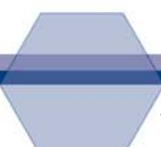
Pat Sutton has recently been appointed to the position of Carer Consultant in the Mental Health Unit of SA Health, in order to provide a carer perspective in the development and implementation of reforms in mental health services. Pat works alongside Consumer Consultants, two newly created half-time positions, which demonstrates the increasing acknowledgement in the health sector of the importance of the lived experience of carers and consumers to the reform process.

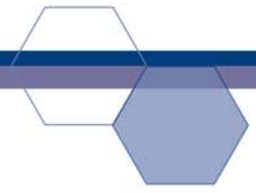


When Pat's two sons were diagnosed with schizophrenia in the early 1990s, life for the whole family changed forever. For many years since, she has worked in the area of education to change attitudes about mental illness, attempting to promote the welfare of people with serious mental illness and their carers. She been closely connected with Carers SA and the Mental Illness Fellowship and is Carers Australia's representative on the Mental Health Council of Australia's National Consumer and Carer Forum.

Schizophrenia is caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain and is characterised by abnormal thought, mood and behaviour affecting motivation, concentration and memory.

*Continued on next page*





High prevalence disorders such as anxiety and depression can be treated and achieve good end results, whereas schizophrenia requires ongoing psychiatric rehabilitation and disability support services to maintain people's wellness and prevent relapses, to help people with the illness to be involved in the community and to help families to cope.

Due to her strong belief that the prognosis for people with schizophrenia and other serious mental illnesses can be good, if the right services are in place, Pat has spent much of her time over the last ten years lobbying for improved community services and supports and advocating for an improved systematic approach to the use of compensatory strategies or environmental supports for the purpose of bypassing the cognitive deficits often present in schizophrenia.

Misinformation about schizophrenia is one of the fundamental causes of the stigma and discrimination experienced by people with the illness and their carers, and has led to people with schizophrenia being among the most marginalised people in our community.

A major concern for carers is the appalling statistics regarding the physical health and early mortality rates of people with serious mental illness. The physical health of people with schizophrenia leads to an average life expectancy 25 years below the rest of the population.

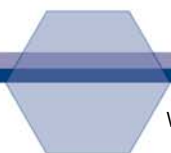
Pat believes that one of the greatest challenges in mental health is educating and shifting attitudes of the whole community about mental illness, particularly schizophrenia, which is still greatly stigmatised in our community, particularly by media portrayals. This includes the need for a much needed culture change within mental health services towards a Recovery oriented system of care, which places the person at the centre of care provision, and includes carers as partners in care plans.

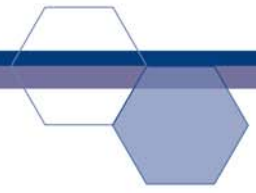
It is a major concern that many elderly carers are often still providing support, often in their own homes, for loved ones with serious mental illness. This is without any guarantee that services and supports will continue when they are no longer able to provide it, and little or no supported accommodation options in the community.

Pat chairs an Advisory Group, consisting of carer representatives from the community, which aims to gain greater recognition of carers within the mental health system and increase their capacity to influence government by the development of processes and protocols.

Pat and members of the Carer Advisory Group are confident that they can work together and really make a difference for mental health consumers and carers in South Australia.

Contact Pat Sutton in the Mental Health Unit, PO Box 287, Rundle Mall, Adelaide 5000.





## Upcoming *Well Ways* PROGRAMS for 2009

### Education programs for Family & Friends of people with a Mental Illness

#### ***Well Ways* "DUO"** -

Is an initial six week program with follow-ups over 12 months for carers and family who will gain increased skills to manage challenging behaviours that are associated with Dual Diagnosis.

Venue – Panangga Activity Centre, 64 Elgin Avenue, Christies Beach

When – Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> of July at 6pm

Program covers up-to-date information about the interaction between mental illness & drugs and alcohol. Sessions will be addressed by a Psychiatrist, a Crisis team member and a Police representative.

#### ***Well ways* "Building a Future"**

An initial eight week program with follow-ups over 12 months

Venue – Blackwood Uniting Church Hall, 266 Main Road, Blackwood

When – Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June at 6pm

Venue – Salisbury East Neighbourhood Centre, 28 Smith Road

When – Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July at 6pm

#### **Plus other Venues –**

Wayville 03/08/09 at 12noon

Payneham 06/08/09 at 6pm

Warradale 17/08/09 at 6pm

This program includes all information on all mental illnesses, services & supports, and is designed to assist families & friends find better ways to care effectively for themselves & others including those with a mental illness.

Other areas where ***Well Ways* programs** will be conducted later in the year include:

Warradale, Port Noarlunga, Findon, Modbury and Enfield.

Register your interest now – so you can be accommodated where possible.

**Bookings essential** – Tel. MIFSA on 8221 5160

Or email - [mlewis@mifsa.org](mailto:mlewis@mifsa.org)





## Celebrations in the West

Western Carers held a special Regional Celebration on 20 May 2009 to mark 10 years of Carers SA-Western Carers in the western region of Adelaide. Over 100 people attended the event. Carers SA CEO Rosemary Warmington reflected on the history and achievements. The Mayor of the City of Port Adelaide Enfield, Gary Johanson, acknowledged the contribution Carers make to the community. Jenny Macklin, Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs talked about the recent Federal Government budget initiatives and how they would benefit Carers. Other special guests included founding members of Western Carers; representatives from past Carer Advisory Groups; Mark Butler, Federal MP for Port Adelaide and Marie Farley Principal Project Officer of the Office for Carers.



*Enjoying the celebrations: Western Carers 10<sup>th</sup> Year Regional Celebration May 2009*

## Celebrating Carer Volunteers

The work with Carers is underpinned by the efforts of volunteers who sit on boards and committees help with events and assist with administrative tasks.

Carers were among the many volunteers attending a special volunteer recognition morning tea with the Governor-General Quentin Bryce on 19 May 2009.



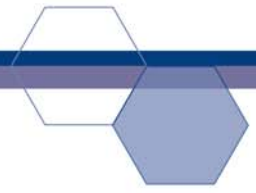
*Carers Mary and Dora at the 10<sup>th</sup> Year Celebration*



*L-R: Jan Wallent, President Carers SA; Governor-General Quentin Bryce; Marjorie Smith OAM Carer Ambassador; Carolyn Gray OAM, Past President Carers Australia.*



*Cutting the Cake, L-R: Young Carer Ambassador Tash; City of Port Adelaide Enfield Mayor Gary Johanson; Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Jenny Macklin, Carers SA president Jan Wallent; Carers SA CEO Rosemary Warmington; Federal MP for Port Adelaide Mark Butler and Deputy Chair of the Western Carers Advisory Group Elle-Mae Newlyn.*



## State Aboriginal HACC Workers Forum

The 16<sup>th</sup> State Aboriginal HACC Workers forum was held in April at Port Lincoln.

Forums are arranged by the Office for the Ageing and bring together representatives of HACC funded agencies that provide HACC services to Aboriginal people.

People travelled from across the state, including the APY Lands, Coober Pedy, Ceduna, the Riverland, Adelaide and Mount Gambier to attend.

The forums provide an opportunity for participants to be involved in training, networking, information sharing and general discussions about issues that have an effect on HACC service delivery in the Aboriginal community.

The Office for the Ageing Executive staff also attended and provided a range of information at the forum, including updates on state and national directions of the HACC program and the aged care sector.

Agencies provided presentations on the services that they deliver in their regions. The presentation about the Indigenous Carer Support program based in Port Augusta that covers the Port Augusta, Port Pirie and Northern Flinders regions was well received.

The forums have been held for approximately eight years and continue to be well attended with over 40 people attending.

The Office for the Ageing considers that the forums are an important event for the South Australian Aboriginal HACC sector and contributes to better service delivery and outcomes for older Aboriginal people.



Participants at the State Aboriginal HACC Workers Forum





## ARE YOU IN NEED OF A RELAXING, FUN DAY ?

WELLBEING FIESTA 2009 – featuring Michael Keelan

**A Carer/Care Recipient Event for Carers living in the South East Metro areas of Adelaide.**

If you would enjoy a soothing neck and shoulder massage, having your face painted, trying your hand at Petanque, Wii Sport, Tai Chi or even Belly Dancing, then you must come along to Wellbeing Fiesta 2009.

Michael Keelan (from Radio 5AA and co-host of Out of the Blue on Channel 9) will host the day, and will also conduct a workshop session on how to grow your own vegetables and herbs for healthy eating.

You can even pick up some free goodies from one of the many information stands which will be available for you to access throughout the day.

There will be lots of freebies and prizes to give away, and you could be in the running to win an accommodation package just by being there on the day!

A selection of activities will be provided for the person you care for while you enjoy the festivities, and we will have support workers available should you need assistance.

Morning, Afternoon Tea and Lunch will be provided. RSVP essential, Carer Support and Respite Centre 8379 5777.

RSVP ESSENTIAL BY WED JUNE 17  
CARER SUPPORT 8379 5777

**the Wellbeing Fiesta!**  
Friday June 26, 10am – 3.30pm  
Cost \$5 per person / Respite available

Carer Support and Respite Centre would like to invite Carers, their families and the person they care for to The Wellbeing Fiesta!

At: Jimmy Dean's  
The South Adelaide Football Club  
1 Lovelock Dr, Noarlunga Downs

Try activities such as:  
Wii Sports, Tai Chi, Karaoke, Crafts, Petanque, Exercise for strength

Enjoy a shoulder massage! Have a make over!  
Get a hand massage! Grab a goodie bag!  
Win a prize! Browse the info stands!

Supervised Disability friendly activities are also provided!

**WIN ACCOMMODATION PRIZE!!**  
2 Nights at Hotel Richmond valued at \$600

hotel richmond

Lunch & morning tea proudly sponsored by:

**Bakers Delight**

the great all-rounder  
**Mushrooms**  
Cooking Demonstration at 11am!  
Sponsored by:

the food studio  
Rainbow Fresh  
HAI GH'S CHOCOLATES  
Nippy's  
Westfield Marion  
trafficroative



MC Michael Keelan from 5AA & Channel 9's 'Out of the Blue' will host a 'Gardening for your Health' workshop.





## Guide Dogs SA.NT forms carer group

Are you a carer of a person who is blind or vision impaired and would like to network with other carers or family members?

Simon Wong, of Guide Dogs SA.NT, says the organisation formed a support group last year and members were already benefitting from their involvement.

"It's an opportunity for mutual support, informal networking and to learn about the services available for carers."

The group meets from 10am to midday on the first Wednesday of each month at Guide Dogs SA.NT's temporary headquarter at 33 Exeter Terrace, Devon Park.

For further information or to register your interest, please contact Simon Wong or Tracey Stuart on 8203 8333.

**Media inquiries:** Media and Communications Officer Amanda Nes (0420 939 649).



**guideDOGS**sa.nt

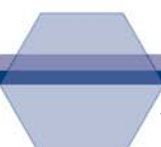
## Office for Carers Graduate

The Office for Carers has welcomed a new member to their team....

Holli Mackinnon started in the Department of Families and Communities in February this year as a Graduate Officer. Her position began in the Policy, Strategy and Research team within the Office for the Ageing. The graduate position involves Holli rotating between three teams during her 12 month position, allowing her to experience different job roles to see what she is most suited to.

During her time with the Office for Carers Holli will be working on a research project summarising quantitative information relating explicitly to carers in South Australia. Using existing data sources such as the Census, Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers and HACC Holli will develop a profile of South Australian carers that will aim at advising future directions in the collection of information on South Australian carers. An important objective of the project will be to identify the existing gaps in data related to the South Australian context of carers.

As a graduate from the University of Adelaide, Holli has a background in Psychology and Social Science. Holli's background in these disciplines has given her an excellent understanding in the area of quantitative research and she is excited to be working on a project associated to such an important issue for all South Australian communities.



## Have Your Say

The 'Have Your Say' forums are being held across South Australia to look at practical solutions for service gaps for family carers. Two sessions, one for carers and one for service providers are being held in regional locations.

The views collected at the forums will be included in an independent report to Home and Community Care (HACC) to help improve local services for carers.

Information from the forums will also be provided to the regional carer support organisation.

Carers of frail older people or of young people with disabilities are particularly invited, as these are HACC target priorities. Services that support carers can also support the forums by letting carers know about them, by encouraging carer attendance, and by providing flexible respite and transport support. In this way, carers can attend the carer session and explore ways their services can further support carers.

Consultations have been held at Murray Bridge and the Parks in Western Adelaide. Coming sessions include Port Lincoln on 16 June and Clare on 16 July.

The project, funded by HACC, is being undertaken by Carers SA. If people are unable to attend they can still make a comment by contacting Carers SA.

For more information call Carers SA Policy Project Officer Phil Saunders on 8291 5600 or email [phil@carers-sa.asn.au](mailto:phil@carers-sa.asn.au).



*Kath, Ralph and Fred, Murray Bridge Have Your Say  
15 April 2009*

## Eyre Carers Opens New Office

More than 4,400 family Carers from around the Eyre Peninsula will reap the benefits of additional support services and programs following the opening of the new Carers SA – Eyre Carers Port Lincoln premises.

The spacious offices in King Street were opened by Carers SA President Jan Wallent on Monday 6 April.

The new facilities will provide more space for Carers to meet, receive emotional support and counselling, and tap into the services and benefits available to them. Carers SA CEO, Rosemary Warmington, said the move to King Street was highly anticipated as demand for the organisation's services had grown significantly throughout the years.

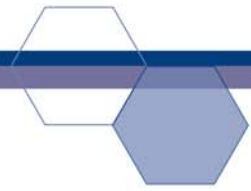
"The new accommodation will enable Carers SA – Eyre Carers to reach a wider group and feature programs to assist family Carers of people with a mental illness, young Carers, Carers of younger relatives with a disability, and Carers of the frail and aged," she said.

The move to the larger space has been made possible due to additional financial support from the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs for Carers of people with a mental illness.

To contact Eyre Carers call 8683 4477 or toll Free 1800 350 004 or email [eyrecarers@carers-sa.asn.au](mailto:eyrecarers@carers-sa.asn.au).



*Marlene Slater, Chairperson of the Carer Advisory Group  
(left) with Carers SA President Jan Wallent*



## Useful Links

### National Inquiry into better support for carers

On Friday 1 May 2009, the Family, Community, Housing and Youth Committee launched its report on the inquiry into better support for carers entitled *Who Cares ...?*

***Who Cares...? Report available at:***

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fchy/carers/report.htm>

### WHAT ABOUT THE CARERS?

Carers looking after a family member with a mental illness.

The following article was published in the *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*.

<http://esvc000144.wic027u.server-web.com/pdfs/carers.pdf>

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### ***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](mailto: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](mailto:michelle.martin@dfc.sa.gov.au) to have their details added to our mailing list.

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#### Office for Carers staff

David Caudrey	Executive Director	8413 9042
Cath McGee	Manager	8207 0418
Marie Farley	A/Principal Project Officer	8207 0453
Pat Coidan	Chief Project Officer	8415 4245
Michelle Martin	Assistant Project Officer	8207 0424
Holli Mackinnon	Graduate Officer	8807 0269