
From:

Carers ACT Communications Department

16 July 2021

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News Update

Dear carers,

Happy winter!

We are well into the cold season now and I hope you are all coping. There has been lots happening so make yourself a warm drink and settle in for a read.

If you would rather a specific read there is information on:

- [Carer Recognition Legislation - Have your say and input](#)
- [Reforms in NDIS and Aged Care](#)
- [Carers ACT Updates](#)
 - [Caring Together Mental Health Carers Conference – book now](#)
 - [Our new aged care respite cottage](#)
- [Latest on COVID-19 and Vaccination for carers](#)
- [Get involved, share your thoughts – opportunities galore](#)
- [Young Carer Bursary](#)
- [Mindfulness for Mental Health Carers](#)
- [Sue Salthouse Leadership Fund](#)
- [Respite and Recovery Grants](#)

Take care,

Lisa Kelly

Chief Executive Officer

Have your say, influence change

Carers Recognition Bill

On 23 June 2021, the Carers Recognition Bill was finally introduced into the ACT Legislative Assembly. This is welcome news to the entire community of carers, as the ACT and TAS are currently the only jurisdictions in Australia that do not have an Act formally recognising care relationships and requiring organisations to recognise and acknowledge the rights of carers. The introduction of this Bill into legislation is an important milestone in our journey towards a Canberra that Cares for Carers and will promote awareness about the vital role that carers have within our community. It will also ensure that the voices and needs of carers are better considered in employment, education, planning and service delivery.

The bill has now been referred to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing for inquiry, during which time, they will give the public an opportunity to provide feedback through written submissions.

For more information on how you can get involved and have your say regarding the Carers Recognition Bill, visit: [Inquiry into Carers Recognition Bill 2021 - ACT Legislative Assembly](#).

System Reforms

NDIS Independent Assessments will not proceed in its current form

NDIS Minister, Linda Reynolds, announced on 9 July that the Federal Government will not push forward with its plan to roll out independent assessments in its current form.

Disability advocates have been warning against implementing the independent assessments program, which would have involved an allied health professional, unknown to the person with disability, to determine someone's eligibility for an NDIS funding plan. The program was trialled back in August 2020 and was reviewed by the Independent Advisory Council early this year, which recommended that the program should not proceed in its current

form. Minister Reynolds said that disability ministers would work together to develop a new method of assessment which hears more clearly the voices of those with lived experience of disability that is based on the principles of equity and fairness.

Aged Care Reforms

In response to the final report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, the Federal Government has commenced the roll-out of several aged care reforms.

From 1 July, aged care providers must review the quality of their daily living services – with a particular focus on food and nutrition - to receive a new \$10 per resident per day Government Basic Daily Fee supplement. The Federal Government will also allocate 80,000 new home care packages over the next two years to ensure senior Australians can choose to live at home for longer. Additionally, from 1 July, measures will be implemented to reduce the use of restrictive practices and promote the use of alternative behaviour management strategies, to ensure safer care for those most vulnerable, particularly those living with dementia.

Carers ACT Updates

An Update from the Policy and Advocacy Team

Hello from the policy and advocacy team which incorporates Carers ACT's Mental Health Carers Voice, the Foster and Kinship Carer Advocacy Service and systemic advocacy for and with carers.

MHCV have been busy organising the conference 'Caring Together' to be held in August as well as consulting with carers and representing your views and concerns on a range of issues. Currently, we are working on a consultation about a national scheme for recognising mental health orders as well as putting the final touches to a website that will help mental health carers understand and navigate the mental health care system.

The Foster and Kinship Carer Advocacy Service continues with individual advocacy for foster and kinship carers and is also running our first Carer Wellbeing program tailored for these carers.

In the last few months, systemic advocacy and policy work has included the important topics of the ACT Health Quality Strategy 2 Year review (thank you so much to the carers

who contributed valuable feedback for this consultation), the Inquiry into the Management of ACT School Infrastructure and the NDIS IA's to name but a few.

The team thanks carers for any feedback you have provided whether it be via email, taking part in consultations or forums, filling in of surveys or commenting on Facebook posts. We welcome and appreciate all your efforts in contributing to systemic change.

Feel free to drop us an email at carer.advocacy@carersact.org.au if you would like to let us know about any systemic advocacy issues you encounter in your caring role.

Caring Together - Mental Health Carers Conference

Mental Health Carers Voice presents 'Caring Together', a conference for carers and family members of people living with mental ill health.

The conference will include an opening message by ACT Minister for Mental Health, Emma Davidson, a keynote presentation from Petrea King, founder of Quest for Life and a presentation from Najla Turk on cultural diversity and caring.

The conference will also cover topics related to housing for people with psychosocial disabilities, smoking and mental illness, lived experience of self-advocacy from carers and consumers, carers contributions to mental health research, and many more. Participants will also enjoy FREE wellbeing workshops and in-seat massage.

Tickets are \$25 for carers and consumers and \$80 for mental health sector employees. All tickets include an optional ticket to the evening cocktail party, where attendees can meet speakers from the conference and socialise with other carers! You can register for this event at:

https://events.carersact.org.au/event/sessions?id=Caring_Together_MHCV_Conference_2021

For more information, contact Mental Health Carers Voice on 6296 9993 or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au.

New Aged Care Respite Cottage and Updates

We are so pleased to announce that on the 19 July we will be opening the doors to our brand new aged respite care cottage. This cottage will duplicate our Deakin Cottage and allow us to provide 8 overnight beds to provide carers with a chance to have a good break for a couple of days or more and places for up to 20 people to join us for a day so their carers can have some time off during the day. People who are aged over 65 years will be eligible to stay at the cottage and we will replicate our approach at Deakin to make sure that it is safe and welcoming for people with dementia as well.

The Cottage has been gifted a name from a local Ngunnawal elder with its meaning being appropriately Alive, Wellbeing and Coming Together. Naragana-Wali is located in Isaacs for easy access to people living on the Southside of the ACT (although it is open to anyone).

We have equipped Naragana-Wali with a range of the latest tools and equipment to assist with providing in-home care. These devices are available for you to test before you buy and you are welcome to make an appointment and check out the sensor pads or dementia watch or dementia cat or other products to see if they will work for you.

The Cottage can accommodate people with respite in their CHSP or Home Care Packages. If you would like to book in a visit, find out more or book in respite call us on 6296 9940 or email naragana.wali@carersact.org.au.

Our social groups for people from culturally diverse backgrounds are up and running. So far we have a group for aged people from Indian backgrounds running each Friday at Chifley Community Hub, and our Sri Lankan group runs from Pearce Community Hub on every Tuesday from 11am – 3 pm. We also have a Muslim group starting at Holt on the Tuesday 3rd August from 10:30- 2:30pm.

We also have vacancies in our Home Care Package administration and would love to discuss your needs.

The aged care team can be contacted via 6296 9900 or Carers@carersact.org.au

Covid-19 Update

Mask Requirements in the ACT

Although the use of face masks is no longer mandatory in the ACT from 10 July, everyone is still encouraged to wear a mask when in spaces where physical distancing is not possible, such as public transport or crowded indoor venues, in the Canberra Airport and in high-risk setting, such as hospitals, health facilities and residential aged care facilities. People under a stay-at-home requirement must also continue to adhere to face mask usage when out in the community. For the latest Covid-19 information and advice in the ACT, visit: [Home - COVID-19 \(act.gov.au\)](https://www.act.gov.au/covid-19)

Fast booking and priority vaccination for people with disability, carers, support workers and volunteers

People with disability, carers, support workers and volunteers have priority access to booking an appointment to receive their COVID-19 vaccine.

Here is what to do: Phone the ACT Vaccination booking line on 02 5124 7700 and Choose Option 3. This will take you to the dedicated phone line for people with disability and those who support them. There will a shorter wait time to book your vaccination and you will be prioritised to receive the vaccine.

Don't forget: Phone 02 5124 7700 and choose Option 3.

Please note that if you are a person with disability you can also email the ACT Vaccinations booking team at covidvaccine@act.gov.au. Please note that this email address is strictly for vaccination bookings.

Covid-19 Vaccination Access & Sensory Clinic

If you are a person with disability you may choose to have your vaccination at the [Access and Sensory clinic](#) within the Garran COVID-19 mass vaccination clinic.

The clinic is available for people with disability and their support staff, volunteers or carer/s attending the appointment with them.

The Access and Sensory clinic offers:

- a quieter space

- longer appointment times
- a separate entrance and exit with accessibility for wheelchairs and other mobility equipment
- vaccinations for support staff, volunteers or carers attending the appointment at the same time as the person with disability, and
- no waiting area so community members can directly enter the clinic.

Access and Sensory clinic times are available on Tuesdays 8am to 12pm and Thursdays 2pm to 5pm.

Bookings can be made by calling the ACT Government COVID-19 **Vaccination Line on 02 5124 7700 (select option 3)** between 7am to 7pm, daily.

Changes to the Check-In CBR App

From Thursday 15 July, mandatory use of the Check-In CBR app will be extended to supermarkets, department stores, petrol stations, take away services, public transport, taxis, Uber, and ride sharing services. Everyone 16 years of age and older will be required to check in, even if they are only in the venue for a brief amount of time.

Get Involved, Have your Say, Share your Thoughts

National Carers Week

Carers Australia and the National Carer Network are seeking carers from across Australia to participate in the National Carers Week campaign as Ambassadors. National Carers Week runs from 10 – 16 October 2021.

Ambassadors will be asked to share their experiences as carers through video, interviews, photos, and media statements, talking about your caring role (who you care for, how you feel about being a carer etc.) and why recognising and celebrating Australia's 2.65 million unpaid carers during National Carers Week is important. The purpose of these Ambassador stories is to broaden the Australian public's understanding of the diversity of carers and the role they play in our community. Filming will take place during late July and August 2021. Should you be willing to participate in the National Carers Week campaign as an

Ambassador, please email communications@carersact.org.au.

Mental Health Wellbeing of People with Intellectual Disabilities: A Digital Hub Initiative

Monash Health are looking for participants for online Collaborative Co-design Workshops, where they are looking for *5 carers of people living with intellectual disability* to attend all 3 sessions. The sessions will be held on 19 July, 26 July, and 2 August. These will be paid opportunities with the details to be provided by the organisation. To register your interest, please email us at communications@carersact.org.au and provide your name and contact details.

NPS MedicineWise 'safe use of medicine for older people' program

NPS MedicineWise is a national visiting program that aims to improve the safe use of medicines for older people. They are looking for up to 5 aged care carers to commit to approximately 2 hours per month, from July to October, to respond to a few questions by email, engage in 1:1 brief discussion via telephone and/or participate in a non-face-to-face focus group. Carers will receive a \$50 gift card at the end of the consultation phase (October 2021) by NPS. If you would like to participate in this consultation, please email communications@carersact.org.au and provide your name and contact details.

Comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment

"Capital Health Network, the ACT's Primary Health Network is conducting a comprehensive community health needs assessment this year as required by the Department of Health, to understand the health, service and support needs in the Canberra region. They are seeking inputs from the community to capture the most accurate understanding of local needs as they can. Your contribution will also help inform potential solutions to address the needs in the future.

To complete the survey, please go to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PKJLHMG>

The survey will take around 20-30 minutes to complete. All your responses will be treated with respect, sincerity and confidentiality. Your time and effort to inform them about what is important to you and the community will be much appreciated. If you would like more information about this survey or have any questions, please send an email to pophealth@chnact.org.au.

Police Guide Interviews

[As reported in the RiotACT this week](#), NOUS group has been hired by the ACT Government to develop a guide for police for working with people with disability as part of the Disability Justice Strategy. Carers ACT are looking for 2 carers who have had experiences with the police to participate in targeted interviews inform the development of this guide. As this is a limited opportunity, we may not be able to accommodate all interested carers at this time, however we will record your interest for future workshops on this resource. If you are interested, please contact mhcarers@carersact.org.au.

The Young Carer Bursary

The 2022 Young Carer Bursary is opening soon from 16 Aug – 30 Sep 2021. The Young Carer Bursary helps young carers under the age of 25 who are studying or training from now until 2022. The program offers 1,000 bursaries to the value of \$3,000 each year.

It is estimated there are 235,000 young Australians aged 12 to 25 who are in an unpaid caring role for family or friends. These young carers often juggle school, employment, and their caring responsibilities, including providing emotional and advocacy support, assisting with medication, supporting with showering and other personal care tasks, household chores, and looking after siblings. The COVID-19 pandemic has further impacted young carers due to balancing online learning, increased caring commitments, and reduced social and community engagement opportunities.

Applications for the 2022 Young Carer Bursary Program open 16 August – 30 September 2021 and are open to young carers in high school, TAFE, university, and other vocational training. For further details on eligibility and how to apply, please visit the Young Carers Network [website](#).

Mindfulness course for mental health carers

Do you provide care to someone experiencing mental illness and/or a psychosocial disability? Would you like to learn new skills to help manage the challenges uniquely experienced by carers #CaringThroughCovid?

We are offering a free six-week online mindfulness course for mental health carers. During the 45 minute weekly sessions, an experienced facilitator from [Simply Mindful](#) will teach you a range of practices and tips to help improve your wellbeing.

In addition, we are recording a range of 'on demand' guided practices which will be available on our website shortly.

You can also use [The Personal Wellbeing Index](#) (PWI) tool that is available for free on our website as a self-assessment. The PWI is a survey for individuals to self-assess satisfaction with their life. The survey consists of eight questions about your satisfaction with different parts of your life. At the end of the survey, you will be provided a score out of 100, which indicates your current wellbeing.

The mindfulness sessions start on 27 July 2021. To register visit [here](#).

Sue Salthouse Leadership Fund

The ACT Government has established [a fund](#) to assist people with disability pursue leadership roles and honour the legacy of Sue Salthouse, who passed away in July 2020.

The \$75,000 fund recognises Sue's hard work championing inclusion and leadership opportunities for people with disability and focuses specifically on women and girls. It aims to assist people with disability to access opportunities that build skills and experience, enhancing the representation and leadership capacity of people with disability.

"Sue Salthouse was a strong advocate for Canberra's disability community and this fund is just one way the ACT Government will honour her passion and hard work to drive inclusive outcomes," said ACT Minister for Disability, Emma Davidson.

More information about the fund can be found on the [Hands Across Canberra website](#).

Respite Effect and Recovery Grants Closed

In April 2021, The Office of Disability opened the Respite Effect and Recovery Grants which were opened under phase two of the Australian Capital Territory COVID-19 Disability Strategy. These grants have now closed as funding for this program has now been fully exhausted. Carers ACT was honoured to work alongside The Office of Disability to support carers applying and we hope the grants were able to provide the assistance desired.

Carer Gateway Supports and Services

Carers ACT is the delivery partner of the Carer Gateway for the ACT region. Carer Gateway provides a range of services and supports delivered both in person and online.

[Counselling](#) – if you are feeling stressed, anxious, sad or frustrated, a counsellor can talk with you either in person or over the phone in the comfort of your own home.

[Connect with other carers](#) – you might like to meet with people like you who care for someone and share stories, knowledge and experience. You can do this with people in your area or you can join the carer forum online.

[Respite Care](#) – if you get sick or hurt and you cannot look after someone, emergency respite services can help you. Service providers will find ways to look after the person you care for while you have a break. Planned respite care can also help you plan for regular breaks to rest and recharge.

[Self-guided coaching](#) – you can work through interactive online coaching sessions at your own pace. You can find a range of topics to help you in your caring role.

[Skills courses](#) – you can use these short online courses to help you to learn new skills in caring for someone and yourself.

[Emergency Assistance](#) - assistance is available to carers who find themselves unable to care for the person whom they support for a short period of time, for instance, if you are a carer requiring hospital admission and are unable to take the person whom you care for.

To access any of these services, please call the Carer Gateway on 1800 422 737. Practical

help and [advice or information](#) is available on the Carer Gateway web pages. You do not have to know exactly what to ask for – you can just talk through any problems you are having, and Carer Gateway staff will try to match you with services that can help.



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