

Carer News in the North

Carers Week 2010 / Summer Edition

*Seasons Greetings to all from the staff at Commonwealth
Respite and Carelink Centre / CarerLinks North*

HOLIDAY SEASON OPENING HOURS

We hope you all have a happy, peaceful and safe festive season.

Our service will operate with a skeleton staff on the following days during the holiday season.

Monday 27th December 2010	CLOSED (Public Holiday)
Tuesday 28th December 2010	CLOSED (Public Holiday)
Wednesday 29th December 2010	9.00am - 5.00pm
Thursday 30th December 2010	9.00am - 5.00pm
Friday 31st December 2010	9.00am - 5.00pm
Monday 3rd January 2011	CLOSED (Public Holiday)

Over the days we are closed, emergency respite can be accessed by calling 1800 052 222 or 9495 2500 and speaking to our After Hours Service.

The call will be answered initially by a paging service.

An on-call Team Leader will then call you back to discuss the most appropriate response to the situation.



Carers Week 2010—Titanic The Artifact Exhibition

Carers of Aged and Disability care recipients enjoyed a day out at the Melbourne Museum. Coach transport was organised to and from the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre / CarerLinks North offices in Preston and the Museum. At the Melbourne Museum, carers viewed the Titanic Exhibition, lunched at The Treetops Restaurant and were entertained by The Little Red Birds. Some of their comments follow:

I enjoyed every moment, completely enthralled in the events

Meeting other carers who are in the same boat as me made great conversations – and to do something I never get to do very often – enjoy a day out!

Loved the bus ride and the Titanic trip

I always wanted to see the Titanic and I loved it – thank you

Museum and Expo was an exhilarating idea, an opportunity I wouldn't have trusted myself to indulge in..... I am very happy

Beyond any expectation I ever had – just Fabulous! "First Class".

Enjoyed every aspect of the exhibition

I am now 84 years and my grandmother told me bedtime stories as a child and what I saw today is exactly as she told me

Had a great time, enjoyed the tour and lunch – would never have done this otherwise

Wonderful to spend some time being looked after, friendly staff, wonderful exhibition, lunch and time with others

The supplied bus – I enjoyed the exhibition, lunch lovely, music lovely

The exhibition on the Titanic, meeting other carers and the lunch was all of great value to me. I think that knowing you are not alone and being served lunch and being looked after was so overwhelming

Meeting others in similar circumstances. Doing something that I wouldn't have normally had time to do and enjoying a nice meal out

The chance to enjoy an outing and not have to worry about everyday requirements

Everything – lunch, exhibition and meeting people

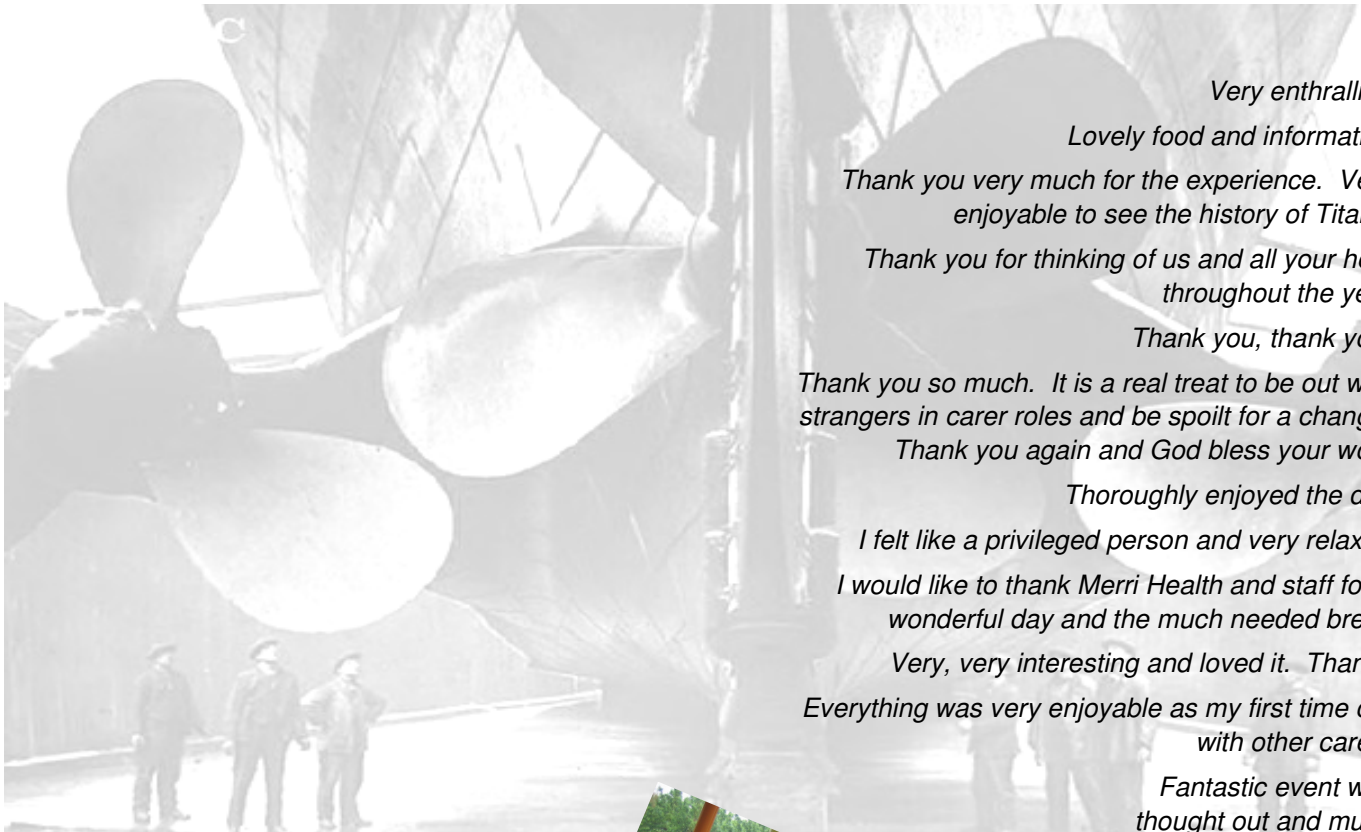
The event was excellent, I felt very spoiled

Titanic exhibition – excellent. Food, presentation and taste – excellent

Excellent outing – a good choice of exhibition



Carers Week 2010—Titanic The Artifact Exhibition



*Very enthralling
Lovely food and informative
Thank you very much for the experience. Very enjoyable to see the history of Titanic
Thank you for thinking of us and all your help throughout the year
Thank you, thank you!
Thank you so much. It is a real treat to be out with strangers in carer roles and be spoilt for a change.
Thank you again and God bless your work
Thoroughly enjoyed the day
I felt like a privileged person and very relaxed
I would like to thank Merri Health and staff for a wonderful day and the much needed break
Very, very interesting and loved it. Thanks
Everything was very enjoyable as my first time out with other carers*

Fantastic event well thought out and much appreciated

This has been the highlight for me in the past year. Thank you

Thank you so much for a wonderful day out. Very appreciated

Staff appear to be well organised and pleasant and very helpful

Keep up the good work CLN. You are great

I feel 'special'. It was great. People from CarerLinks to guide us, an interesting exhibit and lunch in lovely surroundings. 'Linen' tablecloths and serviettes. Background music a nice touch. Delightful!

Thank you so much for today. You will never realise how us carers appreciate it. I am a little refreshed now and ready to go home with a big smile on my face. Thank you so much



Carers Week 2010—Big Day Out

A “BIG DAY OUT” event was held for young carers at Phoenix Youth Centre in Footscray as part of Carers Week.

Young Carers from across the state took part in activities including creative writing workshop, sumo-wrestling, hip-hop dance class, jewellery making and massage sessions. This was followed by a BBQ and movie. It was great to see our young carers having so much fun, overall a great day was had by all.



Carers Week 2010—Patrick McGorry Forum

Almost 300 people including carers, people with mental health issues and service providers attended the Carers Week forum with guest speaker Patrick McGorry. The forum was a partnership between the North West Area Mental Health Alliance and the Northern Mental Health Carer Services Network.

Patrick McGorry, Australian of the Year, who has been working tirelessly to promote mental health issues throughout the year, gave an inspiring talk. He touched on issues such as early psychosis and youth mental health. Question time was lively and spirited, with some informative answers from Mr McGorry. There were also some emotional moments with carers recounting their frustrations with dealing with the Mental Health system and grief around their loved one's illness. However, there was also a general feeling of hope, that government support and commitment to people with Mental Health issues and their carers, is slowly improving.



An afternoon advocacy workshop—'Action for Change', facilitated by Michelle Swann-Carer, Advocate at ARAFEMI and Helen Lococo, Carer Consultant from Werribee Mercy Hospital

Carers Morning Tea at Moreland Centrelink

Merri Community Health Services (Activity Programs, Interchange North West and the Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre/ CarerLinks North) in partnership with Moreland Centrelink hosted a morning tea for carers on Wednesday 8th December 2010. The morning tea represented a move by MCHS to increase consumer engagement and participation in service delivery by providing an opportunity for Managers and senior staff from Centrelink and MCHS to hear about and learn from carers' experiences.

All carers present identified with the ongoing responsibility, commitment, love, frustration, isolation and grief associated with their caring role. Their stories highlighted the diversity and complexity of people's lives. Carers included a mother caring for a son and daughter with mental health issues as well as an ageing parent, an ageing nephew caring for an elderly aunt, a daughter caring for a mother with progressed dementia, a mother caring for a daughter with

physical and intellectual disabilities, a wife caring for an elderly spouse and a young carer supporting a mother with mental health and physical disabilities.

Through their storytelling, carers were also able to provide useful tips to Centrelink regarding some of the processes that could be improved to support them care more effectively. Carers also demonstrated that they (and the people they care for) access a range of services across MCHS and the opportunity to bring service units together assists staff to better understand each other's programs and supports a more integrated service delivery across MCHS.

We would gratefully like to thank all carers for giving their precious time to assist us to better understand the needs and issues of their role. All are ordinary members of our local community, all doing an extraordinary job. May carers have a Merry Christmas and safe and peaceful New Year.

'Naming the Changes' for people caring for a person with dementia or cognitive changes

Between August and December 2010, eleven carers met on seven occasions to discuss the changes that being a carer had brought to their lives and consider changes which are anticipated in the future. During the sessions, the people they care for were supported to participate in an activity of interest to them.

On each occasion, the carers and the people they care for, when able, shared an informal lunch together which provided the chance to talk to others who share a similar experience.

Comments received at the conclusion of the program included:

"I have done many sessions in the past but none that was so carer focused."

"A very special series of carer support sessions has just come to a conclusion..."

"Each session was driven by lively activities and enthusiastic open-ended honest discussion."

Merri Community Health Services in conjunction

with Carers Victoria is pleased to be able to offer this program again in 2011 and invites people who are caring for a family member or friend with dementia or cognitive changes to participate.

There is no cost to participants for the session, lunch and associated activities.

Topics will include:

- Change Loss and Moving Forward
- Impact of Caring
- Maintaining Intimacy
- Continuing Bonds
- Caring till the End

You are welcome to book for the full program or for the sessions of interest to you. Sessions will be held at the Plenty Ranges Convention Centre in South Morang commencing on 11th May 2011.

If you are interested in attending please ring Judy on 9495 2548 to register and discuss services which will assist you to participate.

Carers Week 2010—OFSP Carers Lunch

The OFSP carers lunch was held at the Heidelberg Golf Course on 13th October as part of Carers week. Carers enjoyed a meal and a chat with some lovely classical music (pictured below). As always, carers said they enjoyed the opportunity to come together, enjoy each other's company and swap stories.



Older Families Support & Planning Team

On 30th November, the Older Families Support and Planning Program in conjunction with Respite Connections conducted an information session for older families at the Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre in Preston.

The session was well attended with almost 70 carers joining us that morning.

The session was opened by Michael Cromie, Manager Housing, Partnerships and Innovation from the Department of Human Services, North West Region.

Mr Cromie spoke about the 74 new packages that will be available in the North West Metropolitan Region in 2011 to carers who are over 60 years old, caring for a person with a life-long disability, at home (see opposite for more information about the Respite for Older Carers ROC packages).

Following Mr Cromie's introduction, we had seven speakers representing seven service providers who presented on their individual programs and respite packages available to older families. Each presenter spoke about different respite options and how families can access them and use the services according to their individual needs. The speakers outlined the aims of the respite programs which are to support people with a disability and their ageing carers to:

- Ensure enough support to maintain the current caring and living situation
- Plan for a health or family emergency
- Begin building on skills to increase independence of the person with a disability
- Provide respite to prevent carer fatigue.

Following the presentations, carers had an opportunity to speak to individual service providers and register their interest to receive a respite package.

If you would like more information about the Respite for Older Carers (ROC) packages or any other respite options, please contact Older Families Support and Planning Program on 9495 2500.

Respite for Older Carers (ROC) Packages

In 2011 there will be 74 new respite packages available in the North West Metropolitan Region funded by the Department of Human Services. The packages offer planning and financial support of up to \$8,750 to assist carers to continue supporting their family member at home, ongoing.

Who is eligible?

- Family carers who are over 60 years old caring for a person with a life-long disability at home; 45 years and over for members of the Indigenous Community
- Carers who are caring for an individual with a disability as defined by the Disability Act 2006 and who are residing in the North West Region of Melbourne
- Priority is given to older parent carers who have been caring for their adult child with a disability, at home

Who provides Respite for Older Carers Packages in the North West Region?

- Annecto—types of respite available: in-home, out-of home, holidays and recreational respite. Contact *Alexis Stergakis* on 9314 0988 for more information
- Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre—types of respite available: in-home, out-of home, groups, holidays and recreational respite. Services are for carers from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Contact *Nikki Marshall* on 9496 0200 for more information
- Care Connect—types of respite available: in-home, out-of home, holidays and recreational respite. Contact *Susan Grey* on 9362 8000 for more information
- ADEC—types of respite available: in-home, out-of home, holidays and recreational respite, access to group activities and carers groups. Services are for carers from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Contact *Halime Duzen* on 9480 1666 for more information
- Melbourne City Mission—types of respite available: in-home, out-of home, holidays and recreational respite. Contact *Rhonda Miles* on 9487 9281 for more information
- Northern Support Services—types of respite available: in-home, out-of home, holidays and recreational respite, access to respite house located in Ethol Street Thornbury. Contact *Gemma White* on 9486 5077 for more information
- DASSI—types of respite available: in-home, out-of home, holidays and recreational respite. Contact *Sylvia Constantinou* on 1300 032 774

How can you refer for a ROC package?

- You can contact one of the above service providers directly or you can contact Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre /CarerLinks North on 9495 2500 and ask to speak to an Information and Response Worker.

The Koorie Services Information Day

The Koorie Services Information Day was held at the Epping Memorial Hall on 7th October 2010. Organisations from across the region gathered together and set up information stalls about their services. Members of the Koorie community were present to find out about programs and services that would be helpful for them. It was a great day for the various services in attendance to find out more about each other as well. Susan Davies (Aged Intake Team) gave a fantastic speech about the services offered by CarerLinks North. The Information Day was sponsored by Northern Health, Hume, Darebin and Whittlesea Councils.

Merri Community Health Service Information Stall



Susan Davies delivering her speech

Celebrating Koorie Carers

Merri Community Health Services contributed to Celebrating Koorie Carers by coordinating an event in partnership with Hume City Council and the Indigenous Education Centre at the Kangan Institute on 18th October 2010. The day involved a luncheon and entertainment provided by the Hospitality and Music students at the Kangan Institute. The students did a fantastic job and provided a relaxing day for the carers and staff that attended. Carers also had an opportunity to share their life stories with the group, which added a richness of comradeship to the event.

The Koorie Carers Working Party was responsible for coordinating the day. A big and special thanks to Natasha Schuller, Respite Pathways Worker, who was prominent to the day's success. A big thank you also goes to the other participants in the Working Party including Susan Davies (Aged Intake Team), Cindy Robbie (Service Access Team), Liz Philips (ATSI Community Development Worker) and Gail Conlon (Mental Health Carer Support Worker) and to Hume Council HALO Worker Leanne Brooke. The day was a great success and CarerLinks North hope to be involved in many more similar events to support Koorie Carers.



A carer receiving a relaxing massage



Some of the community enjoying the day

Aged Team

Carers in Transition

In Partnership, Carers Australia Victoria, Respite Connections in the Western region and Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre/ CarerLinks North facilitated information and support sessions for carers. The four week sessions were held in August/September for family carers caring for an aged person and provided carers with assistance and support in planning for residential aged care. A counsellor from Carers Victoria provided carers with emotional support and information and guest speakers from Centrelink and Elder Care Rights provided relevant information. The topics covered were services, financial and legal information and dealing with emotions and change. A carer talked to the group about their own experience of transition and the group took this opportunity to share concerns and ask questions. At the final session, carers visited an Aged Care Facility, met with the Director of Nursing and enjoyed a relaxed lunch together after the visit.

Carers provided positive feedback about attending the four sessions and their comments included:

“very informative”

“very inspiring, made me look outside the box and take care of myself”

“a wonderful course, lots of fun, laughter and tears”

“gave us ideas what to do/prepare for these changes and to help us cope”

“it was amazing that most of us had the same feelings and thoughts and it’s not just me who feels this way”

“insights into why you feel what you do is helpful”

“this is such a difficult time and all your help makes a difference”.

The Carers in Transition course will be running again March/April 2011. If carers are interested in attending the course to be held at Carers Victoria in Footscray, please contact Lesley on 9495 2542.

Carers Day out at the Aquarium— November 2010

Twenty-one carers of the frail aged and three workers from the Aged Team enjoyed a day out exploring Melbourne’s amazing Aquarium!

Carers from the North had the opportunity to make new friends, learn skills and share information.

The day out supported our belief that health and well-being is improved through developing links and friendships and supporting others in similar situations.

The group enjoyed a superbly catered lunch while overlooking the Yarra on a glorious Melbourne sunny day. With respite and transport taken care of, carers could truly sit back and relax with their minds at ease.

Some of the feedback received was inspiration enough to begin planning another successful event:

“Loved it! Got out of the house....talked to other carers....good feelings”

“I could have spent several more hours in this wonderfully interesting place...great to chat with other carers...”

“Thankyou for a most enjoyable and relaxing day.... I don’t have days like this”

If you are a carer and would like to discuss your situation further, or are interested in attending similar events, please call an Information and Response Worker on 9495 2500.



Aged Team

Male Carers Sessions—Next Group Commencing in March 2011

The last Male Carers group for 2010 was held in September and was a great success again.

Carers from the North had the opportunity to make new friendships whilst sharing and learning new skills and gaining information.

The group runs Tuesdays fortnightly in the mornings. We will be extending the program to six sessions in response to feedback from the male carers in the last group.

The sessions primarily focus on the challenges of caring. The topics include changes to family roles on becoming a carer, self care, dealing with stress, tips on exercise and diet, relaxation, injury prevention and back care. There is also a session presented by Australian Legal Aid related to carers.

If you have not attended before and would like to register your interest or find out more about the March 2011 Male Carer sessions, please contact Leanne or Jacquie from the Aged Team as soon as possible — Tel: 9495 2500. Transport and in-home respite are available if requested.



Supporting your Ageing Parents – Where to start?

Do you need to assist your parents in ways they could previously manage independently?

Has your parent experienced changes to their memory or thinking or have a diagnosis of dementia which is limiting their ability to manage independently?

Are you interested to know what services are available and how to get assistance in providing care which will assist you to support your parents and continue to meet other commitments you already have in your life?

Merri Community Health Services in conjunction with Carers Victoria invites people who are caring

for a family member or friend with dementia or cognitive changes to participate in an information session to discuss where to start, what is out there and how to navigate the system.

There is no cost to carers and those to whom they provide care for the session, lunch and associated activities.

The session will be held at the Plenty Ranges Convention Centre in South Morang on Thursday 10th February 2011 followed by lunch.

If you are interested in attending please ring Judy on 9495 2548 to register and discuss services which will assist you to participate.

Aged Team

Finding Your Voice—A Program for Women who are Carers

Finding Your Voice Program for 2010 has been very successful. The group runs for six weeks (three hour sessions) and is available to women carers who are caring for people over 65 years or has an ageing condition such as dementia. The group is offered twice a year and aims to explore and address the emotional impact of the caring role on women.

Over the six weeks, topics will include:

- Recognising signs and symptoms of stress and strategies to address them
- Exploring and dealing with the emotional impact of the caring role (including guilt, isolation, compassion, fatigue/resentment, grief and loss)
- The importance of adequate support, including professional, peer and social supports
- The importance of self-care and permission to make sure it happens.

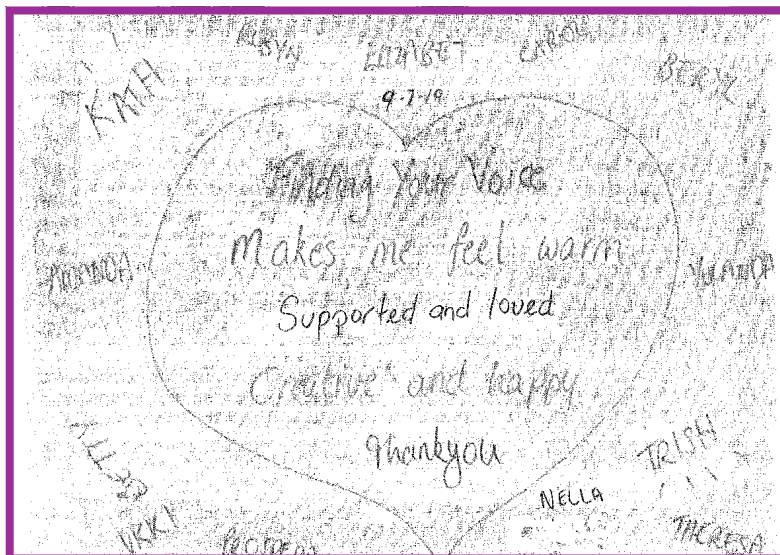
Facilitators Trish Reck and Kathy Armour are skilled and qualified group facilitators who have many years of experience in working with groups.

The common themes that continue to emerge in each group are loss and grief, anger, guilt and the need for a non-judgmental space to share with others the difficulties of their journey and experiences. The relief of knowing that they are not on their own and for the first time being able to share their innermost feelings without being judged is a healing experience. In the words of participants:

"Finding my voice gives me strength to keep going with everyday life...."

"Finding friends who understand, finding we are not alone. We have found each other"

"Finding Your Voice makes me feel warm, supported and loved, creative and happy. Thank You!"



The next Finding Your Voice Program is scheduled for early May 2011.

There is no cost for participation. In-home respite and transport is available on request.

If you would like further information or you are interested in attending the next group, please contact Christina or Luciana on 9495 2500.

CONTACT US

VISIT

Level 2
110 Chifley Drive
Preston Vic 3072

POST

PO Box 2021
Preston BC 3072

PHONE

9495 2500
1800 052 222*

FAX

9495 2599

EMAIL

cln@mchs.org.au

WEB

<http://www.northerncarers.org.au>

*freecall from land lines
mobile calls at carrier rates

About Us

WHO ARE CARERS

Carers are family members and friends who look after someone who has an ongoing disability, chronic or mental illness or is frail aged. The person they care for has difficulty managing at home or in the community without assistance.

MERRI COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES LTD

Auspices the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre / CarerLinks North. Our services include:

Commonwealth Carelink Centres, co-located with Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres, are funded by the Department of Health and Ageing to provide information about community aged care, disability and other support services to individuals in the community, general practitioners and other service providers.

Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres exist in all regions of Australia. They are funded by the Department of Health and Ageing and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs. Their purpose is to provide support and coordinate respite services for carers.

CarerLinks North is a state funded service which is run alongside the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre in the Northern Metropolitan Region to provide carer support and respite coordination for carers in the region.

All About Carer News in the North

Carer News in the North is produced bi-annually by the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre / CarerLinks North to inform interested parties of news, events and stories in relation to carers in the Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne, and also recent happenings at our service.

SUBMIT AN ARTICLE

We welcome article submissions from carers, carer support groups and service providers.

The newsletter is due for release in June and December. Deadlines for submissions are the 15th of the prior month (e.g. 15th May for the June newsletter).

OUR MAILING LISTS

If you are receiving the printed edition of our newsletter and you have an email address, please consider saving trees by requesting to be added to our email newsletter mailing list. The newsletter is sent out in PDF format (requires Adobe Acrobat, which is available for free download).

The current newsletter and newsletter archives are also available in PDF format on our website: <http://www.mchs.org.au/services/ccrc-cln.html>

CONTACT

For enquiries, requests to be added to our mailing lists and article submissions, please contact our Newsletter Editor on 9495 2500.

Would you like to be on our newsletter mailing list?

Send this back to the address below or email: vickif@mchs.org.au with your request and address details.

Your Name:

Your Postal or
Email Address

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre
CarerLinks North
PO Box 2021
Preston BC Vic 3072

Postage
Paid
Australia

