

# Carer News in the North

Winter Edition 2011

## National Disability and Carer Congress

*National Disability & Carer Alliance: Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, Carers Australia and National Disability Services*

The National Disability and Carer Congress 'Make Every Australian Count' was held at Etihad Stadium, Melbourne on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2011. The Congress provided a great opportunity for people with disabilities, carers, family members and disability service organisations to consider the far reaching implications of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). It was evident throughout the conference that participants were in agreement that the current disability services system is broken, with limited opportunities for decision making, self-direction and control given to people with disabilities. Disability can affect anybody at any time. It is essential that we have a new approach which can address existing deficiencies in an equitable, efficient, cost effective and accountable way.

The Australian Government's Productivity Commission's research into, and evaluation of, the current disability system has resulted in the draft document 'Disability Care and Support'. This document can be viewed on [www.pc.gov.au](http://www.pc.gov.au) or you can request a hard copy. Some of the key points in the Productivity Commission's findings include:

- "The current disability support system is underfunded, unfair, fragmented and inefficient, and gives people with a disability little choice and no certainty of access to appropriate supports".
- "There should be a new national scheme – the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)- that provides insurance cover for all Australians in the event of significant disability".

Over 1,000 people from all over Australia listened to inspiring presentations from key politicians, people with disabilities, carers and service providers. There were opportunities to raise issues, ask questions and put forward ideas in a unique environment where participants from all walks of life were united in their support of an NDIS. As Hon Bill Shorten MP, Assistant Treasurer & Minister for Financial Services & Superannuation, said in his opening speech:

- "You need to have the discipline to stick to your message. And you need to stick together as a movement.
- And persevere – because the door to great change is ajar. It just needs more pushing by more people to open the door to a time.
- Persevere until the cause for change is no longer a question but an accepted and bipartisan truth that can no longer be ignored".

Support from all Australians is essential if we are to improve Australia's Disability Services Sector and benefit from a National Disability Insurance Scheme. Please consider registering your interest and support on the website [www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au](http://www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au). Click on "Count Me In". Forward this onto your family, friends and colleagues for consideration and inclusion.

Heather Liesis  
Information & Access

Newsletter of the Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre / CarerLinks North

## MY PLACE KeyRing Network

## Life Skills Cooking Course



On Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May, five families from the Older Families Support and Planning Program (OFSP) attended an evening information session at the Cromwell Street Glenroy office of Merri Community Health Services. Information was provided by Geraldine Fowler from Northern Support Services about the MY PLACE, KeyRing Network. This is a social support model for people with an intellectual disability who would like to live in the community with suitable support services in place.

Northern Support Services currently have three Northern region KeyRings in place in Ivanhoe, Reservoir and Heidelberg.

They are seeking interest to set up another KeyRing in the Glenroy/Pascoe Vale area.

Carers who would like to find out more about this model can ring Seana on 9495 2503 or Mary on 9495 2508.

### MY PLACE KeyRing Network

My Place, KeyRing seeks to provide people with an intellectual disability with the opportunity to live more independently by being involved in a closely associated network of housing.

The program aims to reduce the social isolation and vulnerability for people living independently. Links are made to each other and community facilities and services, building in layers of support which are local, affordable and specific to the person's interests and goals.

Nine people live in the same neighbourhood, within walking distance of each other and are supported by a Network Volunteer.

In 2010 the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre / Carer Links North (CRCC / CLN) funded a 33-week Life Skills Cooking course delivered by the NMIT Work Education Centre for adults with disabilities. Seven participants enrolled in the course, attending weekly three-hour evening classes. The course assisted the participants with developing their independent living skills, whilst also providing respite to their ageing parents.

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011 was a very exciting and important day for participants with the Life Skills Cooking course graduation ceremony held at Merri Community Health Services' Boardroom in Preston. Annie Russel, Coordinator of Work Education, Julie Lew, Program Coordinator and Kirsten Woodhouse, Life Skills teacher, represented NMIT while Seana Garrett and Beata Amico of the Older Families Support and Planning Program represented CRCC / CLN.

Family and friends looked on with pride as each participant received their Statement of Attainment acknowledging completion of a Personal Development subject and a small gift to further encourage their interest in cooking.

The participants spoke positively of their experiences in the course, and some chose to address the audience speaking of their excitement about cooking and what a positive experience it was to be a part of the student fraternity at NMIT. Many people expressed their hope that the cooking course will run again as it combined a fabulous respite outcome for carers with socialisation and skill improvement for the participants.

Annie Russell from NMIT also spoke and praised the amazing efforts of the students and their commitment and passion throughout the course; she also talked about how enriching the experience was for both the staff and other NMIT students to have the Life Skills students joining the NMIT community for a year.



NMIT Life Skills student, Katrina Jackson with her teacher, Kirsten Woodhouse

## Mental Health Program Day Retreat

Carer Mavis attended the February Creative Drawing/ Painting and Meditation Journey workshop, facilitated by Frances and Rosey from 'Nurture Inside'. The setting for the workshop was the beautiful Amberley Edmund Rice Centre in Lower Plenty.

*"In February, I attended a Healing Workshop.*

*I was glad I went as I was surrounded by people who had lost partners or had other issues as carers similar to mine.*

*The workshop was great; there was no pressure to be involved in activities and you were able to go in and out of the programs at any time.*

*It was a very supportive workshop. The lunch was delicious; we ate it while looking at incredible views which made the lunch even more enjoyable.*

*After lunch I chose to go for a walk down to the river. One of the ladies who accompanied me was from Greece, and it was amazing how much she knew about the plants growing in the garden. She told me that in Greece many of the plants were used for medicinal purposes.*

*It was a lovely break and I thoroughly recommend the Mental Health Program day retreats to all carers."*

For information on upcoming retreats please call Lisa Chamouras on 9495 2505 or Gail Conlon on 9495 2540.

## Guardianship, Administration & Powers of Attorney

The Older Families Support and Planning (OFSP) Program, in collaboration with the Office of the Public Advocate, conducted two information sessions for older families discussing the issues of Guardianship, Administration and Powers of Attorney. Both sessions were very well attended with over 60 carers coming to each session. The presenters, Patrick McGee and Helen Rushford took their time to explain the topics and answer all the questions posed by the audience.

For further enquiries on upcoming OFSP information sessions please call Beata Amico on 9495 2522. For more information on services offered by the Office of Public Advocate call 1300 309 337 or go to:

<http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au/>

## Koorie Carers' Wellbeing Day



On 21<sup>st</sup> April 2011, CRCC / CLN North Mental Health Program, in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Services Family Counselling Service, held a Koorie Carers' Wellbeing Day at the Minajalku Centre in Thornbury.

The theme was Self Care, and the day's aim was to provide Koorie Carers with a safe space to connect and share experiences of caring in a supportive environment. Uncle Reg Blow did an acknowledgement of country and invited participants to take part in a smoking ceremony before the commencement of the yarning circle.

With guidance from Vicki Walker who facilitated, and assistance from Uncle Reg and the talking stick, the group discussed the frustrations and emotions they felt just getting by every day, and shared their experiences and difficulties in accessing services.

Lunch provided a welcome break and was followed by an art session with Rosey Hallewas of Nurture Inside where carers placed their painted hand print on canvas and wrote something adjacent to describe their feelings as a carer.

Prior to the conclusion of the day, each Carer received a showbag containing information on services, useful resources and a few special extras which were very well received.

It is the hope of the agencies involved that similar events be held in the future to support Koorie Carers of people with Mental Health issues and provide effective assistance to them.



*Rosey and Frances of Nurture Inside with carers and artwork from the June 2010 Warburton Retreat.*

*"Nine overworked carers started the retreat; three days later the same nine carers had made new friends, rested, relaxed, journeyed, created, expressed, enjoyed, breathed, dreamed, believed, exercised, ate well (over ate even—it was so good) and celebrated themselves, each other and life itself."*

## CONTACT US

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## ABOUT US

### WHO ARE CARERS

Carers are family members and friends who care for someone who has a 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.

The Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre / CarerLinks North provides information about community aged care, disability and other support services to individuals in the community, general practitioners and other service providers and provides support and coordinates respite services for carers.

### 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).

### CONTACT

For enquiries, requests to be added to our mailing lists and article submissions, please contact our Newsletter Editor on 9495 2500 or email [vickf@mchs.org.au](mailto:vickf@mchs.org.au)

## Upcoming Events

### Young Carers Camp

The Young Carers program will be running a camp for Young Carers aged 14-18 that live in the Northern Region, which will involve Archery, Abseiling and much more. This camp will be held on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> June at Baanya Biemi (located in Anakie) and is free to all Young Carers. If you wish to attend the camp please contact Michael Pollock on telephone 94952500 or mobile 0420 684 006.

### Disability Camp

In partnership with People Outdoors a community based non-profit organisation, the Disability Team at CCRC / CLN have successfully run a number of camps and day activities for people with disabilities and their families. These camps and day activities provide recreation, respite and fun to people of all abilities and their family.

There is an upcoming camp to be held on the 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> June for a weekend away of fun in Gidwell Park, Gembrook. If you wish to attend the camp please contact the Disability Team on 9495 2500.

### Aged—Male Carer's Group

The Aged Team will once again be running a Male Carer's Group which will commence in September 2011.

Male Carers from the North will have the opportunity to make new friendships while sharing and learning skills and information.

The group will run on a fortnightly basis and consist of six sessions and will focus on the challenges of caring. Topics will include changes to family roles on becoming a carer, self-care, dealing with stress and tips on exercise, nutrition, relaxation, injury prevention, back care, legal and financial issues.

If you would like further information or are interested in participating in the group, please contact Jacqueline on 9495 2500.

### Aged—Finding your Voice Program

The next Finding Your Voice Program is scheduled for early November 2011. The group will run 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 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.

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.