

# Carers

*news*

Spring 2015



## *Assistive Technology*

How it Helps Carers Now and  
into the Future

## *Carer Story*

Flower Power Gives Canberra  
Girl Gayana an Active Role

## *Young Carers*

I am the Everything...

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# Message from Caroline

Welcome to *Carers News Spring* edition.

This issue's theme is service and innovation. We are featuring stories about Assistive Technology and social enterprise café - *Branch Out* and innovative high-tech accommodation for people with disabilities with *Sorrento Care*. *The Aged Care Report Card*, a website which shares the experiences and provides independent feedback to Aged Care Providers is also featured. Plus there is a story about the software application *MyHome Reach*, which is designed to support communication and social contact between carers and the people they care for.

I am especially excited about Carers Victoria's new Strategic Plan (2015- 2018) which has just been released. It builds on the strengths of the past and provides a vision for a successful and sustainable future which will enable us to grow our reach, diversify our service offer and maintain Carers Victoria as 'the' place to go for all carers for advice, information, services and supports in Victoria. Once again, a big thank you to all carers who attended our consultations last year to review the old and inform the new Strategic Plans. You can access the Strategic Plan on our website [www.carersvictoria.org.au](http://www.carersvictoria.org.au).

We are very pleased to announce Andrew Hilson has commenced with us in the role of General Manager, Commercial. Andrew's most recent role was General Manager, Finance and Corporate Services at Wesley Mission Victoria. We recently



said a big thank you and farewelled Andrew Hunt, General Manager, Finance and Business Support who has retired after three years with Carers Victoria.

From a national perspective, the Assistant Minister for Social Services, Senator the Hon. Mitch Fifield has announced the establishment of the Carer Gateway Advisory Group which is to guide the co-design of the National Carer Gateway announced in the Federal Budget. Ara Cresswell, CEO of Carers Australia will Co-Chair the Advisory Group and said, "Carers Australia hopes that the Carer Gateway will be a significant development for Australia's 2.7 million family and friend carers."

We are looking forward to seeing you all at the events planned across Victoria for National Carers Week (11 - 17 October 2015) and the Mingle events (17 September to 27 November 2015). Shortly, we will also be sending out invitations to our Annual General Meeting on 17 November. Key note speaker will be Professor David Hayward, who is the Dean at the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies at RMIT.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition, warmer weather and beautiful spring blossoms.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline Mulcahy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Caroline Mulcahy**  
CEO, Carers Victoria

# What's happening at *Carers Victoria*

## Hey Grant – Young, Queer and Caring Online Survey Results



Thank you to everyone who filled out our 'Young, queer and caring online survey' over the past few months. We had a great response from all over Victoria. The survey found that young queer carers identify with a range of gender identities, sexuality and intersex status. All LGBTIQ categories were represented and ages ranged from 14 to 25. Young queer carers support parents, partners, friends, siblings, grandparents and children with a wide range of illnesses, physical or intellectual disability and mental health challenges. Around 75% identified with the definition of a 'young carer', yet many say they had not heard the term before doing the survey.

More details are posted on our website [www.carersvictoria.org.au/how-we-help/LGTBI-carers/young-queer-and-caring-survey-results-june-2015](http://www.carersvictoria.org.au/how-we-help/LGTBI-carers/young-queer-and-caring-survey-results-june-2015)

For project news and updates, like us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).



## Sing For Good – Creativity Australia

Sing for Good, one of Creative Australia's programs to transform lives through creativity, has launched their online Sing for Good 2015 campaign and Carers Victoria has joined up as one of their Community Partners. Sing for Good is all about doing good and feeling good! Donations raised through Sing for Good will help people in need to access inclusive arts-health programs, including Creative Australia's With One Voice choirs.

Everyone is welcome to join. [www.creativityaustralia.org.au/what-we-do/sing-for-spring](http://www.creativityaustralia.org.au/what-we-do/sing-for-spring)



## No Interest Loan Scheme Extended Across Victoria

Carers Victoria's No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) partnership with Good Shepherd Microfinance has been expanded statewide across Victoria after a successful trial period in Melbourne's western suburbs.

For more information about the scheme call **1800 242 636** or see [www.carersvictoria.org.au/how-we-help/nils](http://www.carersvictoria.org.au/how-we-help/nils)

## Carers Victoria's New Strategic Plan (2015 – 2018)

Carers Victoria's new Strategic Plan builds on the strengths of the past and provides a vision for a successful and sustainable future which enables us to grow our reach, diversify our service offer and maintain Carers Victoria as 'the' place to go for all carers for advice, information, services and supports in Victoria. To achieve our vision, our Plan is built around five strategic priorities:

- Create the place to go for all carers in Victoria
- Support more carers and build their capacity to care
- Maximise and leverage our expert knowledge of carers and caring
- Increase community awareness and engagement to improve outcomes for carers
- Be viable, sustainable and able to grow.

The new Strategic Plan can be found at [www.carersvictoria.org.au](http://www.carersvictoria.org.au)



## Mingles 2015

We invite you to join Carers Victoria for a great day out at one of our Mingle events held between September and November across Victoria. Find out about services and supports in your local area and make new friends with other carers, while enjoying lunch and entertainment.

See [www.carersvictoria.org.au](http://www.carersvictoria.org.au) for more details.

# Aged Care Facilities New Ratings Website



Above // Lauren Todorovic, Founder and Director

The concept of the Aged Care Report Card (ACRC) website was conceived when Lauren Todorovic, Founder and Director was looking for an Aged Care Facility for her grandmother.

Even though she was a professional in the industry, with over a decade of nursing experience specialising as a Cognition and Dementia nurse consultant, Lauren still felt overwhelmed with the task of searching for an Aged Care facility that would meet her grandmother's exact needs and personality. She realised that there seemed to be no national independent rating services for people looking for Aged Care facilities for their family members. There was no rating that was based on an industry benchmark of excellence in care.

Additionally, once she found a suitable Aged Care facility, she was reluctant to provide direct feedback regarding their services. "Even though my background was a nursing professional, when put in the position of giving feedback to the Aged Care facility I wanted to remain anonymous. I just didn't feel comfortable writing a feedback form as I didn't want my grandma to be treated differently or seen to be the person with the 'complaining' granddaughter I couldn't help thinking how many other people are in this same position," said Lauren.

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*"The Aged Care Report Card provides nurses, carers, residents and family members with a platform to share experiences and provide independent feedback back to the Aged Care Provider"*

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The Aged Care Report Card is about connecting the most important stakeholders – residents, their loved ones and health professionals – to enable the provider to make improvements based on what people accessing their services want. It also provides a platform, to 'showcase' those excellent facilities leading the way in the industry. Using seven key criteria to benchmark and measure excellence from a consumer perspective, users can rate or view feedback on any Aged Care facility in Australia. This includes staff presence, nursing care, friendliness, quality of food, activities, cleanliness and environment and management.

There is an overwhelming choice of Aged Care facilities in Australia with over 2,720 facilities (source: Aus Gov AIHW (2013), Residential Aged Care Supplementary Data Tables).



It is difficult to find independent information about standards and quality of care. Australia is facing a rapidly ageing population. In 2012, the Australian Bureau of Statistics stated, "Over the next several decades, population ageing is projected to have significant implications for Australia in many spheres, including health, labour force participation, housing and demand for skilled labour".

The demands of an increasingly ageing population are becoming particularly apparent in Aged Care services at all levels of care.

There are peak bodies who have come on board as partners with the Aged Care Report Card, including the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, Minter Ellison Lawyers and some of the Carer Associations including Carers Victoria, Carers ACT, Carers South Australia and Carers Queensland.

For more information see  
[www.agedcarereportcard.com.au](http://www.agedcarereportcard.com.au)

# 10 ways...

## To Feel Better About Yourself

**H**ow you feel about yourself can have huge impacts for your health and wellbeing, as well as how you cope with the challenges of life. Here are some suggestions on how you can make positive changes to feel better about yourself.

### 1 Trust yourself

Believe in your inner resources. By giving yourself time and patience, you will find the right answers for you.

### 7 Strategies to cope

Adversity comes to us all and to some carers more than most. It can be a great confidence booster to develop strategies that you can use when tough times happen. This may include having friends and family that you can rely on for support.

### 2 Positive thinking

Learn to recognise and dismiss negative thoughts. Train yourself to replace negative thoughts with positive ones.



### 8 Don't let anyone tell you who you are

You feel like people have negative judgements about you don't let it influence who you are, how you feel about yourself and what you can achieve.

### 9 Reframe your identity

Describe yourself. Experts say your self-worth can be defined in the first five words that you use. Did you focus on your positive or negative attributes? Think about who you admire, how you would describe them and how you can aspire towards a new identity for yourself.

### 10 Gratitude

Focus on the positives. Write a list of all the things you are grateful for. It might be hard to start off, start small (it's spring time!) and soon you will have a list a mile long. For those who are really feeling it. Join the gratitude dance – check it out on YouTube.

### 3 Focus on your strength

Each of us has skills and positive attributes. Focus on the best things about you and develop these.

### 4 Improve yourself

We all have things that we don't like about ourselves. Whether it's something physical or a personality trait, investigate strategies for changing yourself for the better.

### 5 Master or create

Gain confidence from learning and exploring and take time for yourself while doing it.

### 6 Ditch expectations

Unrealistic expectations can lead to disappointment and negative thoughts. Try to suspend expectations and deal with reality. Don't be afraid to ask for help.



# Flower Power Gives Canberra Girl Gayana an Active Role

There's a knock at your door, a rustle of flowers and a sneak peak into your window to see if you have a dog. You open the door and standing there is a girl dressed head to toe in pink and holding the most beautiful flowers you've ever seen. She hands you your flowers and insists on a hug. After she finishes hugging, checking out your nail polish and telling you that you're cute – she'll sneakily try to meet your dog, cat or baby.

*"A beautiful girl named Gayana – a 16-year-old girl with Down Syndrome, does this incredible flower delivery"*

She also happens to be my sister, a gorgeous, onesie-wearing extreme frozen yoghurt enthusiast.

My family and I created GG's Flowers – a socially sustainable florist in Canberra that employs people with special needs and creates meaningful employment opportunities. This idea was fuelled when my parents and I saw that Gayana, because of her disability, wouldn't live a normal life like her peers and sisters. Rather than sitting around and accepting this as her destiny, we decided to take matters into our own hands and create a sustainable and special opportunity for her. GG's (Gayana and Geetha) are the mother and daughter duo behind the business

that work in effortless harmony. They're best friends, so it's no surprise that they love working together to create and deliver beautiful floral arrangements for all sorts of occasions.

Geetha has worked in special needs schools all around Canberra, loving, supporting and caring for children with special needs like they were her own.

She decided to hang up the whiteboard markers and pick up the flowers in pursuit of her dream for her daughter to be employed in a safe, reliable and fulfilling job. After spending years training and accrediting to be a florist.

We call ourselves the GG Girls – a three-woman team revitalising the floral industry in our city. Geetha makes the flowers, Gayana delivers (with a hug) and I, well I flap around on social media and try to share my flower power vision with the rest of Australia.

I've never really seen myself as a carer as my parents (who have worked hard to provide our family with the best of everything) have always ensured Gayana was treated the same as her siblings.

I can't wait to see what the future holds for my family, but most importantly – for my sister. We've done something very small to ensure her life is extraordinary and I'm incredibly proud of our efforts. It's been a hard slog and I won't lie when I tell you that I've sometimes felt like we're rolling a boulder up a mountain.



Above // GG's honoured to receive 2014 inclusion awards. Photo by Martin Maras.

But it's for a special little girl with a special purpose and for that, I'm truly grateful and proud of our business.

I can only dream that other carers, parents and siblings consider taking an active role in ensuring their special person lives a purposeful life too.

Story by Nip Wijewickrema an ACT Carer

Carers ACT assists people with disability to learn independent living skills, meet new friends, build confidence and enjoy being part of the local community. All of our services are flexible, tailored to individual interests and offered in a safe and welcoming environment. For more information visit [www.branchout.org.au](http://www.branchout.org.au)



# NATIONAL CARERS WEEK 2015 11-17 OCTOBER

**#Carers2015**

**Host an event**

Send us your photos

Celebrate carers

**Buy a badge**

Fundraise for carers

**Put up posters**

Call the media

**Instagram us**

Talk to your council

**Put on a stall**

Raise awareness

Meet other carers

**#Carers2015**

National Carers Week is a national campaign which falls between 11 and 17 October. The main focus of the campaign is to recognise and celebrate the outstanding contribution carers make to our community.

National Carers Week is a time to celebrate and recognise the 2.7<sup>1</sup> million Australians who are in a caring role; whether they are caring for a partner, a parent, a child, a friend or a neighbour.

It is likely that you or someone you know is an unpaid family carer. Nobody plans to become an unpaid family carer and you never know what is just around the corner. The birth of a child with a disability; an injury due to trauma; the onset of a chronic or mental illness; or the development of frailty means that anyone of us could become a carer, or need to rely on care at any time.

To show your support for National Carers Week we invite you to host an event and show your support for carers. By simply holding a morning tea at work, at school or at home, you are helping to raise awareness for the unpaid family carers within your community and celebrating their extremely valuable contribution they make on a daily basis.

*National Carers Week is an initiative of Carers Australia and funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS).*

For more information see

[www.carersaustralia.com.au/events/carers-week-2015/carers-week-2015](http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/events/carers-week-2015/carers-week-2015)





# Helping to Maintain Independence *MyHome Reach*

Over the years there have been many new technologies introduced to improve the lives of carers and the people they care for.

One of these products is MyHome Reach. Carers ACT is currently two months into a six-month trial project of MyHome Reach. MyHome Reach is a software application designed to support communication and social contact between carers and care recipients. The software is delivered through a tablet device on the carer's end and an Android smartphone used by the person they care for.

The MyHome Reach software consists of a number of functionalities including but not limited to:

- 1 An event schedule, which covers functions such as medication reminders, family visits, home care visits, GP or hospital visits.

- 2 A carer login record with minimum activities of daily living to cover functions such as meals, heating, mobility, environment, general upkeep and a wellness response.

- 3 A subjective response by the person being cared for regarding how they are feeling, provided on a regular basis (one or more times a day). The person being cared for can respond by selecting one of three options 'Great', 'OK' or 'Poorly'. The response is captured and can be reviewed over time. The response can be communicated to a designated individual via test message at the time of entry.

Sharon Scott, Carers ACT's MyHome Reach project coordinator said, "The program is proving a great success. We have had feedback from a carer who travelled away to Queensland and was able to keep in touch with the person she cared for.

*"The application allows carers to have peace of mind and the people they care for can live more independently"*

For people living in the ACT who would like more information on the trial call **1800 052 222** or email [MyHomeReach@carersact.org.au](mailto:MyHomeReach@carersact.org.au)



# Branch Out



The sun hasn't even risen yet when Michelle starts work. Prepping the day before, she goes about her day filling catering orders and preparing lunch and morning tea meals for the staff of the ACT Government's Education Directorate, Stirling.

A social enterprise is a business venture that trades to achieve a social outcome and generate enough income to cover its running costs. While these businesses operate like any other, aspiring to the highest commercial and service standards, they differ in that serving the community is their priority.

Carers ACT operates the social enterprise Branch Out Café and Catering which aims to be financially sustainable while providing economic, social and environmental benefits to local communities. It seeks to employ people who face challenges in finding employment, including people with disability, people with mental health needs and other vulnerable Canberrans.

Put simply, our business provides much-needed local jobs, training opportunities and services to the most disadvantaged people within our community.

Our social enterprise is also an important part of Carers ACT's strategy to build a more resilient and sustainable organisation that works with communities to enrich local lives.

The innovative social enterprise began in February of this year, with the first exclusive catering partner being the Hedley Beare Centre.

Branch Out Café and Catering currently employs seven people. One of these, Connah is the participant of the program. Connah came to Carers some years back. He went through the award-winning Branch Out training course and has now secured work as the Branch Out Café and Catering delivery driver and kitchen-hand.

Branch Out Café and Catering manager, Robert Jeston said, "It's been amazing seeing Connah grow with confidence. Here is a young man who has found it difficult to find employment and now he is working, earning money and feeling like part of a team."

Rob also noted that the enterprise has seen interest with many volunteers helping out in the kitchen.

The social enterprise has grown 'organically' from a hospitality training/transition to work program for young adults with intellectual disability. Carers ACT has transformed the Holt-based kitchen for commercial services. Carers ACT is currently transforming more of this space to allow for more participants and volunteers to participate.

*"People who come and volunteer report that helping out makes them feel a part of the community, connected, valued, supported and engaged," Rob said.*

The Branch Out social enterprise will soon launch a community garden based at the Education Directorate's site in Stirling (previously a College). This will enhance catering services by providing a patch to plate model that provides organically grown produce for our catering services.

"The Canberra community has really rallied behind the enterprise. We are fortunate to have a community that really supports our values and beliefs. I am often surprised however at how far the word has spread. People know our name and we are establishing a reputation for the quality of our food," Rob concluded.





# Assistive Technology

Above // Prosthetic leg. Image by derek\_b <https://flic.kr/p/buDce1>

## How It Can Help Carers Now and Into The Future

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2014), “One in every ten Australians relies on Assistive Technology (AT) in their daily lives.”<sup>1</sup> There are numerous definitions of what “Assistive Technology” is, but in its simplest form: “It is any device or system that allows an individual to perform a task that they would otherwise be unable to do, or increases the ease and safety with which the task can be performed.”<sup>2</sup>

AT products can be categorised into four main groups:

- 1 Personal care aids
- 2 Daily living aids

- 3 Communication aids, and
- 4 Mobility aids (from home to vehicle modifications).

They can include walking sticks or can openers to very sophisticated devices using artificial intelligence, complex programming and robotics. A number of aged and disability service providers are introducing “telecare” – continuous, automatic and remote monitoring of a person’s activities and any significant changes can trigger an alarm.

Assistive Technologies can also include digital technologies that support social engagement, employment, learning and communication. They can now “open a door, turn on a light or connect to the internet at the blink of an eye, a head movement or even a thought, are being made more flexible and customisable for individual users”.<sup>3</sup>

The AT market has been considerably influenced by the advancement of technology and the increased use

in mobile smart phones and tablets, and demand will grow with an ageing population.

Professor of Computer Science, Dame Wendy Hall suggests that, “Technology could revolutionise the future of homes. It could remind people to do everyday tasks, like locking the front door. People with dementia could be guided through their home prompted by small actions that make them safer. If they fell over, clever carpet laced with optical fibres could alert a family member.”<sup>4</sup>

Can you imagine being cared for by a robot? While this might seem like science fiction, a large number of countries with ageing populations are exploring alternative solutions in the care workforce. Japan has the one of the highest ageing populations with an estimated 20 per cent of their population now over 65. The Toyota Motor Corporation has been experimenting with assistive robots called Care Assist Robots.

## What's happening in Australia?

There is no doubt that technology has the capacity to break down barriers, but people's attitudes are central to this, as well as viewing people with disability differently: as individuals who can be enabled by technology to live fuller lives.

Fundamentally it comes down to an individual solution as each individual has different needs. What might be appropriate for someone, may not be appropriate for another person with disability.

The roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will help to address individual needs. It aims to provide individuals with "long-term, individualised support that is reasonable and necessary to meet the needs of people with permanent and significant disability, or who meet the eligibility requirements for early intervention". Once funding is approved by planners, reasonable and necessary items are included in individual support plans. The NDIS is committed to supporting all people with disability to self-manage their individual support plans and encourages them to make their own decisions.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), which implements the NDIS, has undertaken a project to develop an *assistive technology framework* to guide it towards an individualised, participant-empowered and sustainable approach for assistive technology service delivery.

The National Disability Services (NDS), the peak body for non-government disability service organisations, recently recommended that the NDIA "should make strategic investments that enhance existing technology markets so they become more inclusive, responsive and efficient," and, "a more market-oriented approach to assistive technology consistent with the NDIS objectives";<sup>5</sup>

## Ethical Considerations

The use of AT also brings up ethical considerations, for example, when used to care for a person with dementia. Where possible, the person requiring care needs to be involved in the decision-making process with their consent sought and given.

Why AT matters to carers:

- Peace of mind (greater safety/ health monitoring of the person receiving care)
- Reduction in need for hands-on care
- Improved safety for the carer in performing care tasks
- Improved independence of the person receiving care, and
- Improved communication between carers, people receiving care and service providers.

## Cost

Who pays for AT? Some people will be disadvantaged by not being able to afford AT unless they receive it as part of a package or a specific program. AT also has to meet an identified need and needs to be easy for people to use.

A National Seniors Australia article recently said, "In the future people will expect to access cost effective broadband services nationwide as well as have access to telehealth and other technologies that promote independence, quality of life and wellbeing."<sup>6</sup>

Further, it suggests "that there should be a national approach to the research, design and innovation of assistive technologies which focuses on responding to both current and future needs of Australia's population. It is crucial that such an approach takes into consideration the suitability and affordability of assistive technologies to increase uptake, allowing people to remain productive and live independently later in life".



Above // Older couple: Image by florianric  
<https://flic.kr/p/dbVQ6L>

As we can see, the benefits of assistive technology are huge and necessary, but there are complex issues that surround them. Thankfully, as the age of the population advances, so too do technology and support services. Hopefully this will mean all people who require care are looked after.

## More Information

The NDIS // [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)

The Assistive Technology Suppliers Australasia // [www.atsa.org.au](http://www.atsa.org.au)

Australian Rehabilitation & Assistive Technology Association // [www.arata.org.au](http://www.arata.org.au)

National Seniors Australia // [www.nationalseniors.com.au](http://www.nationalseniors.com.au)

<sup>1</sup> Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary of Findings. Cat no. 4430.0 ABS, Canberra)

<sup>2</sup> Royal Commission on Long Term Care, 1999, UK

<sup>3</sup> Adaptive Assistive Technologies for People with Disabilities by Digital Agenda for Europe, European Commission (13 July 2013)

<sup>4</sup> Technology Could Help People With Dementia Remain In Their Homes by Wendy Hall, The Guardian (23 June 2014)

<sup>5</sup> "Comments on NDIA solutions for Assistive Technology" (Feb 2015)

<sup>6</sup> National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre (NSPAC) & Haukka, S. Older Australians and the Internet" Bridging the Digital Divide, Brisbane (2011)

# High Tech Care

Sensor-controlled automatic doors, wireless control switches for appliances and motion-detected devices for home automation are some of the new high-tech features being introduced into accommodation provided by Sorento Care.

This South Australian-based non-profit organisation which provides specialised care, supported accommodation and rehabilitation services to people with mental health issues and physical and intellectual disabilities and has introduced a range of 'assistive technology' innovations that can be incorporated into a client's care plan.

"We initially undertake a 'client scope' to identify what technology is needed to enable the client to have more control over everyday appliances in their own apartment or home," says Sorento Care director and founder Shaune Fox.

*"As individual circumstances change, we can modify and adapt the technology to suit the client."*

The 'assistive technology' range includes WiFi-enabled light globes, LED light strips and home appliances which can be controlled by an iPhone or iPad.

According to Shaune, these high-tech innovations are just one of the things that set Sorento Care apart.

*"The reason we exist is to provide clients with holistic and inclusive assistance allowing them an independent and fulfilling lifestyle," she says.*

Sorento Care has broken the mould of mainstream care providers by offering a unique package of services which include affordable, modern accommodation and care packages and a daily in-home meal delivery service across metropolitan Adelaide.

Sorento Care's tailored lifestyle and recreation program is another plus for the organisation.

"We aim to encourage all our clients to participate in social activities which not only foster a sense of community and belonging, but also enrich the client's overall experience and wellbeing," says Shaune.

"Sorento Care currently offers a range of accommodation models to suit client's individual needs. In South Australia, the organisation provides an in-home care program and runs supported residential facilities in Salisbury East and Parkside, as well as group homes in Salisbury East, Burton and Hendon staffed by fully trained carers 24/7."

"We also have a portfolio of affordable apartments in the Adelaide CBD and city fringe suburbs for clients seeking independence but requiring low-level care."



In New South Wales, Sorento Care's apartments in Manly support clients with exceptional high needs, including acquired brain injuries, motor neuron disease and cerebral palsy.

"Sorento also provides daily in-home care to clients across metropolitan Adelaide, and has acquired additional home support in the regional areas of Murray Bridge and Maitland to support clients with serious mental health issues," says Shaune.

Looking ahead, Sorento Care has plans to expand its services in South Australia and New South Wales, and is negotiating to set up further services in other states.



For more information visit:  
[www.sorentocare.com](http://www.sorentocare.com)



# *I am the Everything...*

Above // Emily's Drawing

Emily aged 22, is the carer for her brother Jamie aged 23. Jamie has double X double Y syndrome, a genetic condition.

I have always been my brother's "rock". Even as toddlers he felt more comfortable around me. I spoke on his behalf. He repeated a year at school, so we were in the same grade. As teenagers we went to different schools, but they were nearby. When he was a teenager I was his substitute mum. He wouldn't listen to our parents but he would be guided by me. When I finished school I realised I was doing more than a sister usually does because I was factoring his needs into my plans for work and study.

We tried living separately but it didn't work for anybody. Rather than live with our parents, we decided we would live together. Every day he is getting more independent and that is what he wants. I help him work on things like washing, cooking and shopping. I am responsible for everything to do with maintaining our household, but the most significant support I provide is emotional. He floats in and out of periods of deep depression. I become the cheerleading squad trying to make life worthwhile for him.

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*"I am the bad guy. I am the good guy; I am the everything in between."*

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I know that people in paid caring positions can burn out and yet I am doing this 24/7. I cope with this with the support of my boyfriend who lives with us, doing exercise and always trying to remember that life is good.

What I want to do with my career and socially is affected by my brother's needs.

I see everybody around us being spontaneous, easy going, being able to seize opportunities as they arise. For me there is a lot of planning and things to consider before doing anything, so I miss out on some things.

My study and career prospects are significantly impacted. I can only work two days per week. I would love to be at university full time, but I just can't. There are gaps in my work history which any potential employer would question.

The other hard thing is the lack of understanding people have about what I am doing. I am probably asked three

times a week why I am looking after my brother, why my parents aren't doing it or he isn't in a group home. I have even been told I am ruining my life.

The biggest rewards are having a best friend for life and my unconditional love for him. Seeing him learn new things and be proud of himself, watching him grow.

Supports like NDIS and the Young Carers Bursary have been great. NDIS has opened doors I didn't even know existed. I love that my brother is the expert. He says go and he says stop. To be able to use this funding flexibly when he needs it is fantastic.

The Young Carers Bursary has been fantastic. Living on a Centrelink budget is hard. To be the best I can be, I need access to the internet, a computer and have financial relief from the stress. When I am not financially stressed, I have the opportunity to do my best and not crumble under pressure. I have been focusing on my studies. So far I've got over 91% in all of my assignments in the Diploma of Community Services.

# Nurturing Herbs

## How to Create your own Nurturing Herb Garden

**K**itchen herb gardens are an increasingly popular and practical way of brightening up a home by bringing colours, textures and aromas into the kitchen to make them more inviting. At the same time as making your meals more delicious, they also help with keeping the food budget down. Why would you pay \$4 for a small bunch of wilted, flavourless coriander from the supermarket when you can pick yours fresh straight from a planter on your window sill?

### Growing

The hardest part about a kitchen herb garden is setting it up. Firstly, decide which herbs will suit your kitchen

and climate and then make sure the conditions are right for them to grow.

Different herbs need different levels of light (although the majority will prefer full sun where possible, meaning more than five hours of sunlight a day), soil and water conditions. So depending on which way your kitchen is facing and where you live, your selection of herbs may vary.

### What you choose to grow your herbs in is up to you.

Kitchen garden kits can be purchased from hardware shop. Alternatively, if you want to be a bit more creative, you can recycle old cans, jars or plastic bottles; use small pots from the garden; old ceramic vases or bowls.

You can put planters on window sills or hang them from the ceiling. A single hanging planter may be all the space you need to grow several herbs suitable for your home.

Besides complementing foods, herbs can also have medicinal value. Basil, for example, can help with flatulence and lack of appetite; lemon balm can help relieve anxiety, insomnia and upset stomachs; parsley helps with bad breath; peppermint alleviates digestion or gas; rosemary is known to help memory, concentration and improve mood; sage can help provide relief for mouth and throat inflammations; and thyme helps with coughs, bronchitis, indigestion or gas.



## Herb & Caper Sauce

*Turning simple meals into something special*

Herb	Light	Soil	Use
<b>Basil</b>	Sun	Rich, moist, well-drained soil.	Use in a variety of dishes, particularly tomatoes.
<b>Coriander</b>	Sun or partial shade	Well-drained soil.	Leaves and seeds used in salads and Asian, Middle Eastern and Mexican foods.
<b>Dill</b>	Sun or partial shade	Loose soil.	Foliage and seeds used in flavouring and pickling.
<b>Parsley</b>	Sun	Sun/part shade.	Used as a garnish, with Mediterranean foods, in salads.
<b>Chives</b>	Sun or partial shade	Rich, moist, well-drained soil.	Mediterranean foods.
<b>Garlic Chives</b>	Sun or partial shade	Rich, moist, well-drained soil.	Asian food.
<b>French Tarragon</b>	Sun or semi-shade	Well-drained soil.	Use with fish or chicken.
<b>Lavender</b>	Sun	Well-drained, slightly sandy soil.	Potpourri and tea.
<b>Lemon Balm</b>	Sun	Rich, moist, well-drained soil.	Salads and teas.
<b>Mints</b>	Sun or partial shade	Sun/part shade.	Aromatic; used as flavouring. Unusual varieties include orange, blue balsam, ginger, chocolate.
<b>Oregano</b>	Sun	Well-drained soil.	Flavouring for tomato/pasta dishes.
<b>Rosemary</b>	Sun	Light, well-drained soil.	Leaves flavour sauces, poultry, soups. Good for meats, rice. Grown as topiary, and bonsai.
<b>Sage</b>	Sun	Well-drained, slightly sandy soil.	Seasoning for meats, especially pork; herb teas.
<b>Thyme</b>	Sun	Well-drained soil.	Aromatic foliage for seasoning.
<b>Vietnamese Mint</b>	Sun or part shade	Fertile, well-drained soil.	Asian food.
<b>Thai Basil</b>	Sun	Rich, moist, well-drained soil.	Asian food.

## Ingredients

1/4 cup fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves, finely chopped

1/4 cup fresh basil leaves, finely chopped

2 tablespoons fresh chives, finely chopped

2 teaspoons baby capers, drained, rinsed, chopped

1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil

2 tablespoons lemon juice

## Method

Combine parsley, basil, chives, capers, oil and lemon juice in a jug. Season with salt and pepper.

Makes one cup. Serve with: prawns or white fish.

journeys  
of the  
heart

Carers' Stories  
of Love, Loss and  
Transformation

JODI ROSE



# Journeys of the Heart

*Carers' Stories of Love,  
Loss and Transformation*  
by Jodi Rose

"These are stories of courage, compassion, honesty and practical wisdom that would enrich anyone working in palliative care. A timely book."

—Rant Wood, Hospital Chaplain, Perth

## About the author

Jodi Rose's formative years were absorbed in classical ballet as a principal ballerina, owner of her own ballet company, teacher and coach.

In 1994 she met and moved to Sydney with her husband Murray Rose, Australian swimming legend. Since 2012 Jodi has become a public speaker on palliative care and end-of-life transitions. She continues to run her own ballet school in Sydney.

Rose J. (2015), *Journeys of the Heart: Carers' Stories of Love, Loss and Transformation* is available in paperback, \$29.99 on [www.booktopia.com.au](http://www.booktopia.com.au) (ISBN: 9780992351274 – Arbon Publishing Pty. Ltd), and may also be available at your local library.

"Journeys of the Heart is a rich testament to the profound experiences that shape us when we embrace caring for those we love best at the time when they need us most."

—Prescilla Maxwell, Community Relations, Karuna Hospice Service, Brisbane

After 26 years of happy marriage, in 2012 Murray was diagnosed with an advanced form of myeloid leukemia with no effective treatment. For the next two and a half months became his full time carer before he passed away.

The book emerged from an initial cathartic writing outburst during her time looking after her husband. After he passed away, she wondered what would help her and this book is the result. Slowly, over a period of time, she collected the stories by asking carers directly and via her connections – family, friends, ballet and the medical profession. She initially interviewed some of the carers at her home, asking the same questions. Some stories came from people with caring experiences in Australia. Others further afield including America and Ireland. Each carer was

given the opportunity to edit and amend their story. A few carers chose later not to share their story, feeling it was too personal to share. The collection includes a wide variety of carers journeys and experiences; from a palliative care doctor caring for his brother; a daughter caring for her father and a father caring for his young daughter.

The book is divided into five connected sections – Honouring, Acceptance, Caring, Healing and Connecting and Jodi's Healing Tips.

It contains beautiful photos by Leonard Metcalf, as well as illustrations. Very sensitively constructed, it is an uplifting, comforting and inspiration read.

"Jodi... has invited others to join her in sharing their stories of love and grief, resulting in a book that we believe will be invaluable to those who find themselves in the role of carer."

—Dianne McKissock OAM and Mal McKissock OAM, Co-clinical Directors of The Bereavement C.A.R.E. Centre and The National Centre for Childhood Grief, Sydney



# Counselling & Creativity

Carer counselling offers a time to discuss individual concerns and difficulties, joys and hopes experienced in the caring role.

It's a creative, dynamic process supported by meaningful conversations between the counsellor and client. Sessions are provided in a confidential and supportive environment, either face to face, by telephone or video link.

Healthy brain functioning is vital for health and wellbeing improvements. New evidence (Rossouw) supports the idea that being creative can help by increasing a relaxation response and an ability to have fun. This helps reduce stress and anxiety. Creativity may also increase new learning opportunities and growth of new brain cells.

Some counsellors use creative exercises in counselling sessions for a variety of different reasons depending upon individual need and interest. Being creative is not limited to art. It may include painting, drawing, mosaics, photography, creative writing, poetry, music, singing, dance, drama, collecting things, special rituals and gardening.

Working creatively may assist clients to:

- Feel relaxed and have fun
- Feel refreshed and enthusiastic
- Express difficult thoughts and feelings
- Reduce worry, fearful thoughts, stress and anxiety
- Find strengths and abilities

- Change unhelpful thoughts and habits i.E. Old: *i can't make any time for me, to a new perspective of: i am important too*
- Gain self-awareness, self-understanding, and
- Improve health and well-being.

Some counsellors may offer creative exercises in sessions or ones to try at home in between counselling sessions. It isn't about being an artist and there are no expectations or judgments about the work, just a chance to be expressive in a different way.

Carers who have used creativity have said :

"Expressing the more difficult feelings and experiences creatively has given relief and helped stop the thoughts from continually intruding into daily life."

"Painting with my fingers reminded me of being playful, having fun and feelings of freedom."

*"Using my favorite coloured pencils to colour in designs has helped me feel relaxed... to feel less worry and anxiety."*

"When we wrote stories and song lyrics to express our feelings, it got the feelings out and cleared my thoughts."

Why not give creativity a go? Here are a few easy ideas to try:

- Create your own collage to help show the hopes, dreams and improved outcomes you would like to see in your life. Cut images and words from magazines and glue them onto a larger piece of paper. Use paint, pencils and found objects in your work
- Make a symbol of your personal strengths using real or air dry clay
- Paint with your fingers: try using bright colours. Push the paint around with your hands. Who knows... maybe you'll laugh at your painting and feel great afterwards?
- Draw a circle (Mandala) on paper, become lost in doodling with a pen inside the circle. Allow the lines, shapes and patterns to flow in any direction.
- Find an image that you like from a magazine and try to copy it, just for fun.

Place the finished pieces where you can see them every day.

*Creativity may bring out feelings of peacefulness and relaxation; experiences of joy and laughter; of being worry free for the time you are creating and playing.*

It is a time to be you, separate from the caring role. And it may be the start of something you really enjoy.

**Sandra Hatton, Carers Victoria**

The carer counselling program is subsidised for all carers. Six sessions of counselling are provided by professionally trained counsellors across the state. Group, telephone and video counselling are offered through this service. To access the carer counselling program through Carers Victoria please call **1800 242 636**.



## A Work Opportunity for Carers

One of the key learnings from the 'Future of Work Conference 2015' held in Melbourne, was we will be moving into different ways of working in the future; with the emergence of disruptive peer-to-peer models, automation, mobile phone usage, increased consumer choice and an ageing population.

*With change comes potential opportunities.*

Uber as a disruptive business model is one of these opportunities. Uber is a free smartphone app that connects riders and drivers at the tap of a button. Uber lets people with smart phones book and pay for rides from available drivers.

The uberASSIST service sits alongside other services as an alternative option for carers and the people they care for across the Melbourne area.

The service provides self-employment opportunities to carers who are interested in finding part time flexible work arrangements as Uber or uberASSIST driver-partners.

Carers can become uberASSIST drivers and take advantage of a flexible working opportunity which fits around their caring routine. Melbourne-based Uber driver-partner Miriam is a carer who combined caring for her mother and working as an Uber driver-partner.

"I was very cautious when I was picking up that first rider... it turned out to be two of the loveliest girls... and since then - touch wood - every rider has been better than the one before," Miriam says. "I love being an Uber driver. I feel safe and I get to meet really interesting people."

All uberASSIST driver-partners are required to undergo specialised training to support people with disability or specific accessibility needs. The course has been developed by Open Doors Organisation (USA) in consultation with Australian Network on Disability.

Being self-employed, you are responsible for the administration of your personal tax requirements.

### Who can Drive with Uber?

Anyone over 21 with a valid driver's license, car insurance, a clean record and a car. You must have held your current drivers license in your state for a minimum of 6 months. Your car must have 4 doors and be a 2006 or later vehicle make. More information can be found at <http://newsroom.uber.com/melbourne/2015/05/safe-reliable-and-affordable-transport/>

### Do I Need Special Insurance Policy to Drive with Uber?

Driver-partners must hold compulsory third party (CTP) plus third party property insurance and be a listed driver on the insurance policy. If you are unsure about your coverage, check with your insurance provider.

### Am I Covered by Third Party Liability Insurance?

Yes, once you have started driving for Uber. All trips are covered by Uber's \$5m USD contingent liability insurance for bodily injury and property damage to third parties by a large global insurer rated A.M Best.

### What Does it Cost to Drive with Uber?

There are no upfront costs. Uber charges a 20% commission on your fares.

### How Will I Be Paid?

All drivers are paid weekly. Payments are deposited automatically via direct deposit and drivers receive a statement showing their earnings for each trip that week.

### In relation to protecting the transport of carers and their carer recipients, can you provide details of the complaints process?

Riders and drivers provide a rating after every trip and feedback. All feedback items are reviewed by our support teams. Uber provides 24/7 support for riders. All enquiries or support can be directed to [supportmelbourne@uber.com](mailto:supportmelbourne@uber.com)

Uber became a Carers Victoria Carer Support Partner in May 2015. For further information regarding Uber and our partnership please visit [www.carersvictoria.org.au](http://www.carersvictoria.org.au)

If you would like to learn more about Uber or becoming a driver call 1800 242 636 or visit [www.uber.com.au](http://www.uber.com.au) and [blog.uber.com/uberASSISTAU](http://blog.uber.com/uberASSISTAU)

### Reference

*Get Ready for Uber Working* - Nick Toscano, 2 May 2015, The Sydney Morning Herald

*Why Uber Means The End of Work As We Know It* - Daniel Logue and Mark A Hollere, 10 June 2015, [www.lifehacker.com.au](http://www.lifehacker.com.au)

## Gifts that Honour Important Occasions

**M**aking a donation in lieu of gifts or flowers is a meaningful way to honour an important occasion. Whether commemorating the life of a loved one or celebrating a birthday, wedding or anniversary, your gift will touch many lives in a positive way.

A donation to Carers Victoria will help fund vital services required to improve the health, wellbeing, resilience and economic security of carers in Victoria – possibly someone you know.

To find out more about making a donation in lieu of gifts, please contact our membership department on **1800 242 636**.

If you would like to make an online donation visit [www.carersvictoria.org.au](http://www.carersvictoria.org.au)

Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.



## Celebrate Carers by Funding

**C**arers Victoria's National Carers Week (11 – 17 October) is an opportunity to fundraise and support the work of Carers Victoria.

The money you raise can help:

- Decrease the wait time for our much needed carer counselling services
- Support young carers through our young carer scholarship program, and
- Influence government policy through our advocacy program.

### Tips For Running An Event

The following tips will assist in making your event run as smoothly and productively as possible.

### Planning

Work out a timeline and research details such as locations, volunteer support and other essential requirements. Choose an idea that interests you and remember to give yourself a workable timeline.

Things to consider when planning for your event:

- Will your event clash with other key dates in your community e.g. other public fundraising events being held at the same time?
- Do you have a suitable venue? Is it free of charge?
- Are there parking facilities or public transport nearby?
- Do you need permission from the council for a stall?
- Can you ask friends and family for assistance on or prior to the event?
- Are you selling something? If yes, will you need a cash float on the day?

### Donations

Carers Victoria recommends you create a page on Everyday Hero – [www.everydayhere.com.au](http://www.everydayhere.com.au) and allocate Carers Victoria as your chosen charity. This website enables you to create and personalise a page with information specific to your event. Additionally, it takes care of all the money handling. People can donate securely online and receive an instant receipt for their donation. Donations to Carers Victoria that are over \$2 are tax deductible.



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# Carers Sanctuary in the City

Visit Melbourne's Southbank and take  
a look at the City of Melbourne's Carers  
Project: A Sanctuary in the City.

The Carers Project is an arts project that highlights the  
role of carers and the importance of care-giving. The  
Carers Project: A Sanctuary in the City will see a large  
scale dome constructed at Southbank Spillway across  
Victorian Seniors and National Carers Weeks 2015  
(6-17 October).

Artist Jodee Mundy and designer Stuart Beekmeyer have worked  
with a group of carers to design an experiential dome in the heart  
of the city offering a quiet moment to reflect on what it means to  
care for oneself and for others.

The art piece will educate the community on how many carers are  
in Victoria and how easily hidden within public spaces they are.

See Carers Victoria National Carers Week calendar for dates and  
more information.



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