

Carers

news

Winter 2015



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Packages*

What Does Consumer Directed
Care Mean for Carers?

*Carer
Story*

100 Year Anzac Day
Celebrations - Poppies Galore!

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Message from Caroline



Welcome to *Carers News* Winter edition.

As we are now moving into the chilly Winter months with shorter days, we are reminded that we should focus on our health and wellbeing a little more. In this edition, our Caring for Yourself article features the relationship between Food and Mood, and in Tech Talk we have useful apps that can support your wellbeing.

We have had some changes to our Board. Firstly, I am delighted to announce the appointment of David Bartlett as the new President of Carers Victoria. David has been a board member since 2010. On page 4 you can learn about David, and read about his vision for Carers Victoria. We also welcome Charles Hardman to the Board; Charles is a businessman, a parent carer and lives in the West. Sadly, we farewell Katrina Price, who has been a Board member since 2013 and has also been our Treasurer and our nominee for the Carers Australia Board. I would like to thank Katrina for her valuable contribution in advocating for carers in Victoria and across Australia, and for being part of our Carers Victoria team.

Earlier this year, I travelled across Victoria and met with many carers as part of a review of our current Strategic Plan.

"Thank you to all carers who took time out of their busy schedules to come and have a chat with me"

Your feedback has been invaluable and will inform our next Strategic Plan, which will be published and commence on 1 July 2015.

In April I took part in the Murray to Moyne Cycle Relay (M2M), as the support van driver for Team Vision Super. It was early morning starts and long cycling days, but a fantastic effort by our

riders, great fun and we really appreciate their fundraising efforts, as they raised over \$15,000 for Carers Victoria. The Vision Super team enjoyed it so much, they have already started planning to participate in next year's Murray to Moyne Cycle Relay (M2M).

We are also very grateful to our anonymous donor who requested that we establish a Holiday Grant program which, this year, has provided 33 grants of up to \$1,500 for our carers; you can read more about this wonderful donation on page 19. As the financial year comes to a close, we invite you to donate to our Tax Appeal. Any amount is greatly appreciated and will enable us to continue our support for unpaid carers, but we do understand that many will not be in a position to donate to us. You can assist us in other ways by helping to spread the word to other carers in Victoria; do you know someone who is caring for another in your community? If yes, tell them to give Carers Victoria a ring to see if we can help and support them in any way.

Under the federal government's aged care reforms, all Home Care Packages must be delivered in a consumer directed way from 1 July 2015. See page 10 for our feature on what consumer directed care means for carers. On page 8 we look at the features of Carers Australia 2015-16 Budget Submission to the Australian Treasury and the key recommendations including a focus on outcomes for carers under the proposed welfare or social services reform.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition and keep warm over the coming months.

Caroline Mulcahy
CEO, Carers Victoria

What's happening at *Carers Victoria*

No Interest Loan Scheme Launch

In March 2015, Carers Victoria became a fully accredited provider of Good Shepherd Microfinance's award-winning No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS). Minister for Families and Children, the Hon. Jenny Mikakos, formally launched the program at Carers Victoria.

"Everyday almost 800,000 carers in Victoria provide unpaid support to a family member or friend who needs assistance," Minister Mikakos said. "This new program will increase access to safe, fair and affordable credit – especially for carers in Victoria who may be experiencing financial hardship."

"Caring for my Grandma with a baby due in eight weeks has been hard. It has stretched me thin. I am spending a lot of time driving between her house and mine"

Caroline Mulcahy, Carers Victoria CEO, acknowledged the huge difference small loans can make to the lives of carers: "Caring can often lead to financial disadvantage due to preventing carers from accessing paid employment. Carers Victoria is delighted to be joining Good Shepherd Microfinance to further support carers through challenging situations."

Carers Victoria's inaugural NILS client, expectant mother Kirsten, shared how she has been able to repair her car and buy a washing machine.

"Caring for my Grandma with a baby due in eight weeks has been hard. It has stretched me thin. I am spending a lot of time driving between her house and mine," said Kirsten. "With no family to help out, I'm grateful I could turn to Carers Victoria. Getting a no interest loan has been the boost I needed to get me through."

For more information about the scheme call 1800 242 636 or see www.carersvictoria.org.au/how-we-help/nils.



Above // Kamala and Van sampling the cuisine

A Taste of Harmony Lunch: Celebrating Diversity at Carers Victoria

In March, Carers Victoria staff participated in a Harmony Day lunch celebration. We shared fantastic international cuisine and a few staff got into the spirit of things by changing into their national dress for the occasion.

Energy Information Fund and Carer Support Groups a Winning Combination

Over the past six months Carers Victoria has been working to help Carers make informed choices about their electricity through the Victorian Government's Energy Information Fund. As part of this initiative, we have visited 25 Carer Support Groups across Victoria over March and April. These sessions help carers to understand how their electricity bills work and how they can find a better deal for their electricity.

If you would like Carers Victoria to visit your Carer Support Group, please email electricity@carersvictoria.org.au.

If you would like to learn more about how your electricity bill is working, visit www.carersvictoria.org.au/electricity.



Above // Good Shepherd Microfinance and Carers Victoria staff and board members, with the Hon. Jenny Mikakos and Dr. Christine Nixon APM, Chair of Good Shepherd Microfinance



Above // David Bartlett, Carers Victoria's New President of the Carers Victoria Board

Introducing David Bartlett

Carers Victoria is proud to announce the appointment of David Bartlett as the new President of the Carers Victoria Board.

David is an institutional banker with the National Australia Bank and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He has over 25 years' senior executive and board experience gained in private and public sector organisations, including the not-for-profit sector. David joined the Carers Victoria Board in 2010.

"Carers always inspire me through the generosity they show every day - in the happy times and the trying times" - David says

Through his own family caring experience, supporting both of his wife's parents with their simultaneous diagnosis of cancer, Mr Bartlett has a strong understanding that a caring contribution is not just physical and financial, but also very much an emotional cost.

"Caring can hit you financially, but the hidden cost of caring on a family is how emotionally and physically draining

it can be - the financial situation is different for different situations, but the emotional pressures of caring are the same for everybody."

As the President of the Board, David is looking forward to supporting the organisation's new innovative programs, and helping people navigate the caring maze.

David says that the strategic goals of the Carers Victoria Board come down to giving carers the support they need to help them all the way through their caring journey.

"What carers need might be some reassurance or it may be respite, and sometimes they just need the quick answers. We, at Carers Victoria, are striving to become the streamlined service which provides these supports; to make sure we can give the range of services any carer needs, and at a time when they need them."

Miriam an Uber Driver Partner - Flexible Work

In 2005 Miriam's mum moved in with her and her family. Things were going smoothly for many years but it was around 2011 that Miriam noticed a decline in her mother's health. It was around this time that Miriam decided to quit her part-time job to care full-time for her mother.

"I loved taking care of mum," Miriam says. "It wasn't hard for me because I knew it was the right thing to do for both of us"

However, last year Miriam wanted to rejoin the workforce.

"I knew that one day mum would no longer be here and I would need to find a job, so I wanted to be ready to re-enter the workforce when that happened," said Miriam.

She found a part-time job but it only lasted a few weeks. "I had to quit. I would drop mum off at respite at 7.30 in the morning and go pick her up at the end of the day. It was too much for me and mum was exhausted. It just wasn't good," Miriam explained.

Shortly after, however Miriam's son told her that a new company called Uber was looking for drivers. Miriam decided to look into this new 'ride sharing' venture.

Uber is a transport service that lets people with smart phones book and pay for trips from crowd-sourced drivers.

Miriam took part in an induction day, did her research and asked her questions. After passing the police, insurance and registration checks, she was ready for her first drive.

"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.

Being an Uber driver partner gives Miriam the flexibility to work around her caring commitments. Six months on Miriam has had more than 1300 Uber riders in her car. "I love being an Uber driver, I feel safe and I get to meet really interesting people."



If you would like to learn more about Uber or becoming a driver call **1800 242 636** or visit www.uber.com.au

Uber became a Carers Victoria Service Support Partner in May 2015. For further information regarding Uber and our partnership please visit www.carersvictoria.org.au

10 ways...

to declutter your life

Clutter can bring chaos into your life and be a major cause of stress. Ironically, it can also be a symptom of stress. Decluttering can make you feel more organised and in control. Here are some simple tips to help you declutter.

1 Don't get overwhelmed

Take it one room or one cupboard at a time. Take lots of breaks and start 'keep', 'junk' and 'maybe' piles. Go back to your 'maybe' pile after a week to ensure you don't get 'declutter regret'.

- Shoe organisers to store your bottles and cans of cleaning supplies
- Tackle boxes to store batteries of different sizes, and
- Ice cube tray dividers for storage.

6 Clothes hanger trick

Put all your clothes hangers facing out. When you wear something change the hanger to face in. Every six months or year, throw out the clothes facing out that you haven't worn.

7 File away

Keep important paperwork in an organised filing system. Have separate sections for this year's tax return and bills to be paid. It's also a great idea to have a folder with documents that you may need in an emergency such as insurance and passports.

8 Paperless

Tax documents only need to be kept for seven years. Choose paperless billing to save on storage of bills that you only need to check once.

9 Spring clean your computer

Clean files that you don't need and delete icons off your desktop to reduce visual clutter and make your computer run faster

10 Declutter your life

We are all so busy with caring, work, school, family and friends, and millions of other chores and activities. Think about what you value and enjoy and try to find ways to simplify your life.



2 Be ruthless

Don't keep things you know you are not going to use. Packing things in plastic tubs and placing them in cupboards or the garage is not decluttering – it's just moving junk around!

3 Kitchen cleanse

Regularly go through your kitchen cupboard and fridge. Toss out anything past the use-by-date. Put things closer to the front of your cupboard if they are close to expiring and plan to use them for your meals in the next week to avoid wastage.

4 Bathroom purge

Your bathroom can be a major hoarding hazard. Throw out unwanted cosmetics, perfumes and those millions of mini bathroom soaps that you have collected from hotels and never use.

It's also important to go through your medicine cabinet and throw out any medications that are out of date.

5 DIY storage

Listotic.com has 50 brilliant storage solutions – some of the more ingenious include using:

- Shower curtain rings on a coat hanger to store caps and scarves
- Egg cartons in a drawer as a cheap divider
- Egg cartons or plastic cups to safely store your Christmas baubles



Smiling Mind App

Smiling Mind is a not-for-profit initiative and was developed out of clinical studies into the positive impact of Mindfulness Meditation. Results showed that regular Mindfulness Meditation can help combat stress, improve focus and increase resilience. The app contains psychologist-developed Mindfulness Meditations and exercises that can be accessed anywhere, anytime.

The exercises have been adapted for different age ranges from 7–12, 12–15, 16–22 and adult.

Each session starts with a quick series of questions to focus the mind, followed by simple, easy-to-follow meditation exercises. As a result of consistent use, the user will hopefully be able to improve focus and develop healthy sleeping habits. The app also helps users track their progress, so they can feel a sense of accomplishment.

The Smiling Minds app is available for download through iTunes and the Google Play store. Alternatively you can access it online via the website www.smilingmind.com.au

Black Dog Snapshot

Black Dog Snapshot is a free mobile phone app that supports mental health screening, monitoring and help-seeking.

According to Professor Helen Christensen, Director of Black Dog Institute and Chair of the National Health and Medical Research Centre for Research Excellence in Suicide Prevention, Snapshot is a simple, anonymous and effective way to highlight possible problems, empower people to make positive change and support people to seek help if and when required.

“We currently have two big challenges in Australia. The first is ensuring that everyone who needs quality mental health support has access to it. The second is supporting the huge number of Australians who are experiencing poor mental health yet are not comfortable seeking face-to-face help,” Prof Christensen says. ‘Snapshot program has been developed using a combination of mental health expertise, Australian population data and supportive messaging to provide good quality clinical information in a trustworthy yet anonymous environment.’

Snapshot consists of four key steps. Firstly, a screening tool allows individuals to assess general happiness, mood and anxiety, as well as monitor levels of work stress, sleep, social support and alcohol intake. Users are then provided with tailored feedback that highlights areas that can be improved.

This feedback includes direction on how and where to seek further face to face, telephone or online help as required. Finally, results are saved and graphed over time so that users can monitor their behaviours and mental health status over time.

“Research has clearly shown that technology-based solutions work. With government and community support, programs like Snapshot can help to make us all mentally healthy,” says Prof Christensen.

Snapshot is currently available to download for free from the Apple store and will soon be available in Google Play.

For more information go to digitaldog.org.au or blackdoginstitute.org.au

Healthy Recipes by Spark Recipes

The Healthy Recipes app offers a collection of over 500,000 recipes. The simple user interface is easy to navigate and find recipes. Users can browse by category, cuisine, course, occasion, or dietary needs – including gluten-free, lactose-free, vegetarian, and vegan, they can just search for something specific.

The app lists calories, carbs, total fat (and fat types breakdown), protein, sugars and more.

There are videos that show how to prepare a recipe and others that show useful techniques such as zesting citrus or how to handle fresh fish. There is also the ability to save your favourite recipe and share them with friends via email or social media.

The Healthy Recipes app is available for download through iTunes and the Google Play store. It is a genuinely free app with no in-app purchases. Alternatively, the healthy recipes can be accessed via the website www.recipes.sparkpeople.com

Tell Someone Who Cares



According to the ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2012, there are 2.7 million unpaid family and friend carers in Australia looking after the most vulnerable in our society, including approximately 140,000 who need help with bladder or bowel control (Access Economics, *The Economic Value of Informal Care in 2010*).

The care needs of people with incontinence are much higher than those of others needing care. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, in 2009 there were nearly 73,000 primary carers looking after people with severe incontinence; the majority of these female (81%), with most (73%) spending 40 or more hours each week caring, and more having their sleep interrupted (42%) than other primary carers (19%).

The Continence Foundation of Australia is launching a national campaign during World Continence Week (22–28 June 2015). The 'Tell someone who cares' campaign has been developed in consultation with Carers Australia. The campaign's objectives are to provide better support for family and friend carers dealing with the added challenge of caring for someone who is incontinent.

Continence Foundation of Australia chief executive Barry Cahill says many carers can feel overwhelmed by their situation and often struggle in silence, unaware of the support available to them.

"Primary carers who assist people with severe incontinence often feel stressed isolated and report strained relationships with those they care for. It is therefore vitally important that they seek support and advice. These new resources not only provide practical advice, but also outline the available support services, including the National Continence Helpline which can assist with information and referrals to health and support services throughout Australia."

"For carers looking after people with a disability or dementia, incontinence can become the tipping point for admitting their loved ones into a residential care facility," Mr Cahill says.

The new resources for carers include a carer guidebook with practical tips and information on continence management, as well as dedicated web pages with resources and short videos by continence experts.

Carers Australia's chief executive Ara Cresswell said she was delighted the Continence Foundation of Australia had undertaken this important work for carers.

"Providing unpaid family and friend carers with information and practical advice can be vital to ensuring the sustainability of the caring relationship and to the health and wellbeing of both the carer, and the person they care for," Ms Cresswell said.

After Hours GP Helpline

The After Hours GP helpline provides free information and assistance from a registered nurse or medical advice from a GP to people who have an urgent health concern and don't know what to do.

The service is free from a landline.

healthdirect
1800 022 222

Operating times are:

Monday to Saturday 6pm – 8am
Saturday 12pm – Monday 8am
24 hours a day on public holidays

The After Hours GP helpline is not intended for patients with life-threatening conditions that need to be treated immediately. Please dial 000 for emergencies.

The helpline is also not intended for patients whose condition can wait until their GP's practice is open.



Useful Contacts

National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66. Open Monday to Friday 8am–8pm and staffed by continence nurse advisors who provide advice, referrals and resources to consumers, carers and health professionals.

The Continence Foundation of Australia
www.continence.org.au

Carers Australia
www.carersaustralia.com.au

Contact your local Carer Association on 1800 242 636.

Federal Budget 2015-16

Maze Running: finding a path for carers through social services reform.

The second Tuesday in May is significant for all Australians – it's the night when the Australian Treasurer announces the government's budget for the coming year. This year carers and Carers Associations were particularly interested to find out what impact the Federal Budget would have on carers and their families because of the suggested recommendations from the government's Review into Australia's Welfare System.

Each year Carers Australia provides a submission to the Australian Treasury about carer issues it wants the government to consider in developing the budget for the next financial year. In its 2015-16 Budget Submission Carers Australia's focus was on outcomes for carers under the proposed welfare or social services reform.

The eight recommendations to the government in Carers Australia's submission addressed these key issues:

- Integrating and aligning support services for carers – The need for Carers Australia and the Carers Associations to be involved in the design of the integrated carer support model the Australian

Government Department of Social Services is considering. The integrated carer support model is anticipated to cater for all carers regardless of the age and condition of the people they care for.

- Falling between the gaps of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) – Of concern to Carers Australia and the Carers Associations is the withdrawal of funding for services provided for people with disability when their disability is not great enough to receive an individual funded package under the NDIS. These people will still need services to support them in their day-to-day living.
- Impact of social security reform on carers – The need to reconsider the proposed social welfare reforms in the 2014-15 Federal Budget relating to Newstart's participation requirements and the waiting times to access Newstart, the proposed indexation to CPI (Consumer Price Indexation) from 2017, and other reforms that will have significant impact on many carers and the people they care for.
- Assisting former carers to transition to the workforce – The need to better

assist the transition into paid work for former carers or long term carers who often have difficulties entering or re-entering the workforce once their caring role ceases.

- Assisting currently employed carers to combine work and care – The need to consider the benefits to carers and the Australian economy if employers can assist employed carers to combine employment with their caring responsibilities can benefit carers and the economy.*

To read the complete Carers Australia 2015-16 Federal Budget Submission visit: <http://ow.ly/LkjQ1>

You can also visit the Carers Australia website www.carersaustralia.org.au to read their analysis of this year's Federal Budget and what it means for carers and caring families.

Federal Budget summaries are also available on the Australian Government Department of Social Services website www.dss.gov.au or the Treasury website www.treasury.gov.au

*See 'The UK: flexible employment for carers' article in *Carers News*, Autumn 2015 issue: <http://ow.ly/LkjOa>

Tony's Story

Tony Walsh and Paul Wenn have been together for over forty years and live in Melbourne. In 2006 Paul was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and Tony has been his carer ever since. Tony shares their story below.



Left to Right // Paul Wenn and Tony Walsh



"I don't know how I would cope, or anyone in this situation would cope without someone helping them - it's a big job. I'd hate it"

Thank you to Tony for letting us share his and Paul's story, more can be seen at Alzheimer's Australia website www.fightdementia.org.au.

Paul passed away peacefully in 2014.

When I first met Paul it was a simple meeting at the gym one day. He asked for my number and I thought, "he'll never call me", but he did, and then we found out we had a fair bit in common and years later, here we are.

Paul went to see a GP because he was forgetting some things at work. The doctor gave him a referral to a memory clinic. I initially dismissed it because I thought, "Well, there's nothing really wrong here".

It wasn't until nine months later that the GP asked how the memory clinic went, when Paul said, "Oh, I didn't go to that".

At the end of the appointment the neurologist said he thought there was a problem.

They took Paul off to do more tests but there was a nurse in the room and she looked at me and she said, "You've

"I said, "Quite frankly, I didn't realise there was ever a problem", but there was and I had been masking it, because I had just taken over"

gone a very funny shade of grey. I think we'd better go and have a cup of tea".

I think there was reluctance by the doctors to give Paul the initial diagnosis of Alzheimer's. They hunted for other things it may be and there was the further complication of us being a gay couple. But once the diagnosis came there weren't any further issues.

There are no sickies with this job; it is a hard job, but I wouldn't have it any other way. I have regrets that we find ourselves in this situation, but I have no regrets that it was me helping Paul and looking after him.

Celebrating Diversity

Carers Australia took part in Sydney's world famous Mardi Gras 'Fair Day' on Sunday February 22. Several carer associations promoted the role of LGBTIQ carers within our communities. These images show the colourful fun and array of entertainment the day held.



Above // Paul, Carers ACT's Flexible Family Support Coordinator showing his juggling skills at Fair Day, Mardi Gras 2015.

Carers and consumer direction in Home Care Packages

What do the Consumer Directed Care (CDC) changes really mean?



Home Care Packages provide a coordinated package of services tailored to meet specific care needs so that older people can stay at home, and be given the choice and flexibility in the way that care and support is provided to them.

A major change coming under the federal government's aged care reforms is that all Home Care Packages must be delivered in a consumer directed way from 1 July 2015.

This means that the older person to whom the package has been allocated will have choices about:

- What types of care and support are purchased with the package
- When the services are provided – weekdays, weekends, evenings or overnight

- Where the support is provided – at home or out and about in the community
- Who provides the care – from choice of care agency to choice of care worker, and
- How the support is provided to the person and/or their carer.

The other big change is that approved providers will no longer be able to allocate different amounts of funding for different clients. If an older person has been allocated a package, the subsidy for that package can only be spent on services for that person. For a Level 1 package the government subsidy is currently \$21.43* per day; for a Level 2 package it is \$38.99* per day; for a Level 3 package it is \$85.73* per day; and for a Level 4 package it is \$130.32* per day. Some people will

also be eligible for a Dementia and Cognition and Veterans' Supplement of 10 per cent on top of the base subsidy. Other supplements may also apply.

The approved provider will deduct from the subsidy amount all of their costs to manage the budget and to deliver the package. As the fund holders, providers will be required to provide clients with an itemised budget and regular finance reports. This will show how much of the budget is spent on managing and delivering the package.

The most important change is that the consumer can control how the package budget is spent although government subsidies will still be allocated to the approved provider which then allocates packages to eligible older people. Packages are not allocated directly to the individual older person.

What does it all mean for carers?

"The most important change is that the consumer can control how the package budget is spent"

Many carers are attracted to the idea of having more control over how a Home Care Package subsidy is spent and may want to consider taking on some of the management tasks of the older person's package, such as dealing with the agency that sends care workers into the home or supporting the older person with control of the budget.

Respite care in the home and the community can be provided as part of the package. For residential respite care in an aged care facility, package funds can no longer be used to pay the respite resident's basic daily fee (currently \$47.49 per day*). This is because the government also pays the aged care facility a daily subsidy of \$44.21* for low-care residential respite or \$123.97* for high-care residential respite. When the older person has a residential respite stay, the package provider continues to receive a subsidy for up to 28 days per year so this funding can be added to the budget for the rest of the year and be used to purchase additional care and support when the person is at home.

The person receiving a package may need personalised services such as having a person who understands their culture and speaks their language; specialised equipment for a physical or sensory disability, or specialist advice and support for the behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia. Carers should be able to expect that a provider will work with them to ensure that an older person who needs these types of services can have them provided as part of the package or give advice about other services outside of the package.

Under the User Rights Principles of the *Aged Care Act*, each person receiving a Home Care Package has the right to have their *representative* participate in decisions relating to his or her care if they do not have capacity. This usually means someone who holds an enduring power of attorney or guardianship.

"Carer Associations believe that all carers who are involved in providing care and support for an older person receiving a Home Care Package should be involved in decision making about the care plan whether the person has impaired decision making or not"

This is because without the involvement of carers, it would not be viable for many older people to stay at home with only the amount of government subsidy available. A care plan that is developed without taking into account the unpaid care contribution may have a negative impact on a carer's responsibilities depending on the mix of paid care services that is chosen. Carers may also want to ensure that the package budget takes account of times when they will not be available to provide care, for example due to a planned holiday or unplanned illness.

Under the *Carers Recognition Act* (2010) providers of Home Care Packages are required to ensure that the needs of carers are taken into account in the services they deliver. Some of the ways that providers might demonstrate how they do this are included in the Statement for Australia's Carers.

Here is a Sample Survey: Are you recognised as a carer?

1 The provider recognised and respected the relationship between me and the person I care for
Yes No
They show this by

2 The provider acknowledged my experience and knowledge of the person
Yes No
They show this by

3 The provider treated me as a partner in providing care
Yes No
They show this by

4 The provider treated me with dignity and respect
Yes No
They show this by

5 The provider acknowledged that I have my own needs as a carer and as a person
Yes No
They show this by

6 The provider supported me with my own health and wellbeing and to participate in other aspects of my life
Yes No
They show this by

We would like to hear about the experiences of carers and the people you care for in receiving a home care package through a consumer directed approach. Have you made the transition to CDC, or plan to by 1 July 2015? What challenges have you faced? What have you learned? Please contact us at engage@carersvictoria.org.au if you would like to share your story to help other carers learn about CDC.

For more information about CDC in Home Care Packages www.homecaretoday.org.au

*All rates correct as of 20 March 2015. Rates will change again on 20 September in line with changes to the Age Pension.



100 Year ANZAC Day Celebrations Poppies Galore!

Viv and Brenda were only five years old when they started going on adventures together.

Now, sixty years on, they are preparing to go on the adventure of a lifetime.

They are about to take part in the annual pilgrimage to Gallipoli, to celebrate ANZAC day in the same place where their grandfathers became a part of the Australian legend.

Viv and Brenda are one of the 10,000 Australian ballot winners who are getting the chance to be at ANZAC Cove on the eve of the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing.

“When I found out that Brenda and I were going, I honestly didn’t believe it...then I realised how much we had to plan and I got straight into making checklists,” Viv said excitedly.

“The spirit of ANZAC recognises the qualities of courage, mateship and sacrifice which were demonstrated at the Gallipoli landing”

It has been ingrained in Australian culture, just as that of the families that stood beside the boys who left, and the families who stood beside the men who returned – the carers who helped their loved ones who were both physically and mentally wounded.

“I am seeing this as a way to get close to my granddad in a way that I never could. I remember being the ‘apple of his eye’ but his soldier life is something that feels so foreign to me.” Viv said.

Viv’s grandfather took part in many enquiries for the Australian government upon his return, where he spoke of his year in a Turkish prisoner of war camp.

“There is a story he wrote of how he was approached by one Turkish soldier who put a knife to my granddad’s neck but then he bent down and cut off his boots instead. Grandad was left in the Turkish desert with nothing.” Viv said.

Brenda and Viv have both created scarves and poppies with the names and regiment numbers of their families members, and those of their friends.

“I am looking forward to holding their names in my hands and having the silence around me. I think that will be an honour to be there and to remember the sacrifices that my Grandad made.”

Her grandfather moved in with the family, and until his passing when she was 12 years old, was the loving grandfather of many happy memories.

“While I never thought of mum and dad as carers, I suppose they were. They supported Grandad with doctor appointments, cooked him dinners and helped him as he got older.” Viv remembered, “I figured that was what family does.”

We have found this part of the story is not uncommon, however this aspect of war, that of the caring relationships for those who return, is not remembered in the legend.

What makes this story special is how it spans generations, and through the care for her grandfather Viv’s parents started a tradition of caring within their family.

Now at 65 years old Viv has begun caring for her mother, like she did for her father-in-law.

“I watched mum and dad do this, and now my daughter is watching me and hopefully she will support me when I am older.” Viv laughed.

Note: Viv and Brenda left for Turkey on April 17 and had not returned from their tour of Gallipoli before this article went to print.

Young Carer Bursary Program

In Australia, there are some 305,000 young people who are aged up to 25 years with significant caring responsibilities and of these, 75,000 are aged under 15 (SDAC 2012). In addition to the usual challenges of being a carer, young carers also have to juggle the educational and work commitments that are meant to create the opportunities that will set them up for life, but young carers risk losing all this by the added pressure of their caring responsibility.

Too often, it means that young carers sacrifice their education. Their opportunities diminish and it can not

only affect their short and long-term financial security, it can also take a toll on their physical, mental and social wellbeing. Young carers are likely to live in single parent, low-resource households. Many of them come from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.

The Young Carer Bursaries Program assists young carers to continue or return to study. By relieving the financial pressure to undertake part-time work, the program helps those in greatest need to combine education with caring responsibilities.

The program had started earlier in the year, with bursaries given to 150 successful applicants in February to help them at the start the new academic year. In April, the Prime Minister Tony Abbott announced that the government will be funding a further 150 scholarships for young carers at a cost of \$450,000, with a further \$50,000 provided to Carers Australia to support the delivery of the bursaries. This was in response to the 800 applications for bursaries received by Carers Australia for the initial 150 bursaries funded by the programme.

The bursaries are not loans that need to be repaid. They allow young carers to continue their studies or vocational training by providing with them \$3000 for each eligible young carer student to cover whatever expenses prevent them from completing their studies.

www.bursaries.youngcarers.net.au

National Youth Week

National Youth Week (NYW) was celebrated between 10 and 19 April with a full range of terrific events held across Australia. It is an annual, weeklong celebration of young people (aged 12–25). It was launched by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education and Training, Senator the Hon Scott Ryan.

“National Youth Week encourages all Australians to celebrate youth, to recognise the positive contributions that young people make to their communities and provides opportunities for all young people to voice concerns or issues relevant to them,” Senator Ryan said.

This year’s theme was ‘It starts with us’. Victorian young carer Michael Casha, whose older brother David has cerebral palsy, said the theme, “...is a clear statement that we, as young people, have the power to make a difference. We can see the potential for positive change. So let’s stand up together and change the world we live in for the better.”

There are more than 300,000 young carers in Australia, providing unpaid care for a parent, partner, sibling, their own child, relative or friend. When asked what he thought was a strength of young people, Michael said: ‘I really think young people have an overarching ability to question. We’re prepared to ask why processes are the way they are, and put the effort into changing them if we see a benefit in doing so. We live by innovation and we’re willing to take risks for the greater good.’

To conclude the celebrations, the Australian Government’s National Youth Awards presentation was held on 16 April in Brisbane, recognising young



Above // Kalu, Carers Victoria’s Advisor and Young Carer Program Co-ordinator at ‘Young Carers in the Community’ event as part of the National Youth Week in Bendigo.

Australians across seven categories: Youth Safety Award, Youth Courage Award, Youth Culture and Diversity Award, Youth Employment Award, Youth Health Award, Youth Leadership Award and the Youth in Media Award.

To be involved next year, keep an eye on the National Youth Week website: www.youthweek.com.

Food & Mood

Ever wondered if what we eat affects our mood?

Have you ever wondered if what we eat affects our mood? Or does our mood affect what we eat?

The food and mood relationship has many factors: What foods we like to eat – our palates – developed culturally, socially and within our families. What stresses or pressures we are under, how busy we are, and our emotional connection with food. If we are feeling sad, do we comfort eat or eat less?

“Most people understand the link between what they eat and their physical health. But the link between what you eat and your mood, your energy, how you sleep, and how well you think is much more immediate”



Effects of food on the brain

The brain is composed of about 70 per cent fat; it needs omega-3 fatty acids for normal brain development and for maintaining balanced moods. Researchers believe that healthy fatty acids improve neurotransmitter activity by helping the brain cells communicate with each other, improving brain cell plasticity and reducing inflammation that can damage brain cells. These essential fats need to be replenished by foods we eat to help keep our emotions positive.

Brain chemicals – neurotransmitters such as serotonin and gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) – are the frontline mood regulators that help to keep us calm. There are others such as dopamine and tyrosine.

Serotonin affects mood and social behaviour, as well as appetite and digestion. It is made from tryptophan, an essential amino acid which is found in a variety of foods, including fish, poultry, bananas and yoghurt. Foods containing iron, zinc and vitamins B3, B6 and C help make the enzyme reactions to convert tryptophan to serotonin.

GABA helps the brain block out information overload, enabling us to stay focused and calm. The amino acid glutamine is the main building block of GABA and you can get it in halibut, legumes, brown rice and spinach. Vitamins B3, B6 and B12 work together to convert the glutamine to GABA.

What you eat or don't eat for breakfast will have at least a subtle effect by mid-afternoon, and you're eating all day will have a huge impact today and down the road.

So says registered dietician Elizabeth Somer, author of *Eat Your Way to Happiness* (2010).

In addition, fluctuations in blood sugar levels can be linked with changes in mood and energy, resulting in irritability, poor concentration, fatigue, depression and food cravings.

Dopamine stimulates the brain. The brain converts the amino acid tyrosine, which is found in protein, into dopamine with the aide of folic acid, vitamin B6, magnesium and zinc. Tyrosine can be found in almonds, avocados, dairy products and pumpkin and sesame seeds.

Low levels of vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids can affect mental health. For example, links have been demonstrated between low levels of omega-3 oils with depression.

Artificial colourings and flavourings found in processed foods can create abnormal reactions. These reactions could be due to a deficiency of an enzyme needed to digest a food. Lactase, for instance, is needed to digest lactose (milk sugar).

We need to have the right balance between the different types of neurotransmitters available to ensure that our responses and moods are appropriate to any given situation.

Tips for Healthy Eating

- 1 Keep a food and drink diary and note your moods throughout the day.
- 2 Plan ahead and prepare and freeze food.
- 3 Make one small change in your diet a week at a time.
- 4 Remove junk food from the house.
- 5 Drink water – the recommend is eight glasses per day. Sometimes hunger can mask dehydration.
- 6 Limit carbs throughout the day – have more in the morning and less as the day progresses.
- 7 Replace caffeine drinks such as coffee and tea with water and herbal teas.
- 8 Limit processed food and limit your sugar intake.

9 Breakfast is the most important meal of the day as it kick-starts your metabolism.

10 Keep to regular meal times.

11 Eat foods which slowly release energy: oats, unrefined whole grains like brown rice and quinoa.

12 Eat protein-rich foods like meat, fish, beans, eggs, cheese, nuts and seeds every day.

13 Eat essential fatty acids: Omega-3 found in oil-rich fish like mackerel and sardines, and linseeds are vital for the formation of healthy functioning of the brain.

14 Eat happy-inducing foods such leafy greens, legumes, nuts and eggs.

15 Have a minimum of five portions daily of fresh fruit and vegetables (organic if possible).

Contacts and information

The Feel Good Factor – 10 Proven Ways to Boost Your Mood and Motivate Yourself by Patrick Holford

The Food-Mood Solution – All Natural Ways to Banish Anxiety, Depression, Anger, Stress, Overeating, Alcohol and Drug Problems by Jack Callem

Eat Your Way to Happiness by Elizabeth Somer.

www.eatforhealth.gov.au
www.foodforthebrain.org

* This article has not been written by a medical practitioner – GP, qualified dietician or nutritionist. If you are thinking of changing your diet, please first check with your GP.



German Style potato salad

Ingredients

- 1kg desiree potatoes, washed
- 4 hardboiled eggs, peeled, sliced
- 4 green onions, thinly sliced
- 5 gherkins, sliced
- 50 g Vienna style sausages 'Wiener Wuerstchen', chopped
- 1/2 cup whole-egg mayonnaise
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley leaves

Method

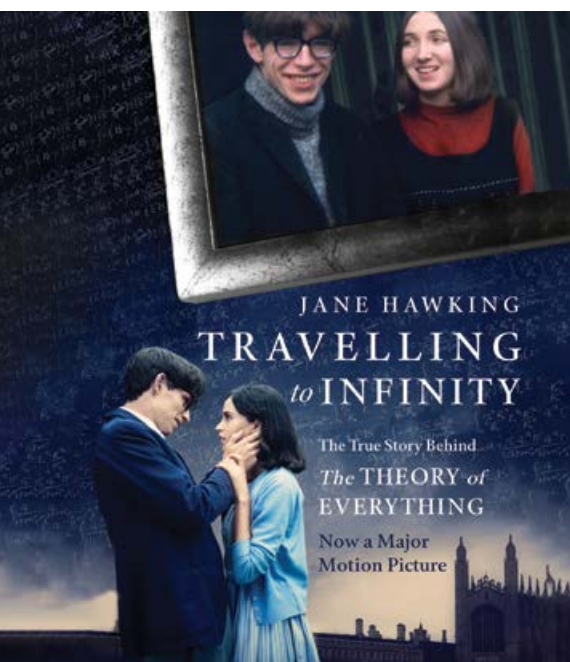
Cook potatoes in a large saucepan of boiling, salted water for 10 – 12 minutes or until just tender. Drain. Set aside to cool for five minutes. Thinly slice crossways. Cool completely.

Place potatoes, egg, onion, gherkin and sausage in a large mixing bowl. Combine the mayonnaise, garlic, lemon juice and parsley in a bowl and season with salt and pepper. Add to potato mixture and toss together. Serve.

Secret tip: Prepare the salad the night before a let it rest in the fridge overnight – and it will taste even better.

Gutten Appetit!

Recipe provided by Robert Gruhn, Carers Victoria



Travelling to Infinity

My Life with Stephen
by Jane Hawking

About the author

Jane Hawking lectures in Modern Languages and is a keen solo and choral singer based in Cambridge, UK. A published author since 1994 with *At Home in France* and with *Music to Move the Stars* (1999), which was the autobiographical forerunner to *Travelling to Infinity: My Life with Stephen* (2007).

The Theory of Everything (2014) is a feature film based on *Travelling to Infinity: My Life with Stephen*, starring Felicity Jones, Eddie Redmayne and Emily Watson. Redmayne won BAFTA Award For Best Actor in a Leading Role (2015), Academy Award for Best Actor (2015), Golden Globe Award for Best Actor (2015) and Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Leading Role. The film also won additional accolades include the BAFTA Award for Best Screenplay Adapted (2015) by Anthony McCarten.

Hawking, J. (2014), *Travelling to Infinity: My Life with Stephen* by Jane Hawking is available as an ebook from the Amazon Kindle Store, \$17.07 on www.amazon.com.au

It is available in paperback, \$23.75 on www.booktopia.com.au (ISBN: 9781846883668 – Alma Books), and may also be available at your local library.

“Stephen Hawking may think in 11 dimensions, but his first wife has learnt to love in several.”

– **The Times**

“What becomes of time when a marriage unravels? And what becomes of the woman who has located her whole self within its sphere? For Jane Hawking, the physics of love and loss are set in a private universe.”

– **The Guardian**

“Jane describes the final, painful years of her marriage in candid detail”
– **The Independent**

– **The Independent**

This autobiography is a frank, straight-up account of the relationship between Stephen and Jane Hawking, how it develops from their first meeting to the spectacular meltdown: he finding new love in Elaine Mason, one of the nurses caring for him, and her, with a family friend. The story contrasts Stephen’s renowned academic success and her selfless devotion to him, putting all her plans and ambitions on hold, juggling the

role of full-time 24/7 carer for him while raising their young family of three children.

The Yin and Yang, the paradox of strong opposite attraction: Her, an Anglican Christian and a scholar of medieval poetry, sensitive in nature, and craving intimacy and expression of love. He an atheist, a pure physicist, a cerebral thinker – arrogant, dictatorial, aloof with a dash of charisma and boyish humour.

The book reveals the dilemmas of everyday life and the progression of Stephen’s body being gradually overtaken by motor neurone disease and her witnessing its passage.

“Travelling to Infinity: My Life with Stephen by Jane Hawkins is a frank, amusing and poignant read”

“This is not a vindictive book, although the agony she went through is palpable; if Stephen’s struggle to keep his mind clear is heroic, so is her determination to balance his escalating needs and those of their three children.”

– **Independent Sunday**

When Counselling Can help

A look inside a carer's world

As a counsellor for a number of years at Carers Victoria I have regularly observed and heard about the external and internal pressures carers experience. Counselling offers an opportunity to understand these pressures and opens options for carers to manage them differently.

Externally a carer can seem to be 'coping'. Sometimes they are even congratulated by others for the very situation they struggle with, making it difficult for them to share their actual 'real' experience. This can further compound the emotional isolation and disconnection they often describe to me.

Carers may also experience many external pressures for example: hospital discharge, loss of services, family expectations and obligations to care. It's common for these obligations to provide the care to be fuelled by judgements from others such as "you're the sibling without children" or "you live the closest". Society can also place pressure on caring, for example, carers say "what would it look like if I didn't care for my sick wife?" or "It's just what you do, isn't it?"

Internally, caring can be a demanding, draining and confusing role. Internal



pressures include our own core values and thoughts like "I should be able to do this", "I couldn't live with myself if something happened", "I couldn't bear the thought of putting him into a nursing home" and so on.

Carers have described to me that it can be a rollercoaster of emotions – guilt, fear, worry and isolation... The world of caring can be a very private one; behind closed doors, with nobody witnessing the sleepless nights and restless feelings.

Carers have often expressed feeling trapped, anxious and uncertain. These feelings aren't exclusively the experience of just carers; many other people can feel emotionally vulnerable and anxious through difficult situations and challenging relationships. It's worth remembering that not all these unpleasant feelings are experienced by every carer.

In my counselling work I have seen how these beliefs and expectations can be

difficult for carers and can lead carers into a seemingly never – ending trap of guilt and emotional survival. After quietly managing these uncomfortable and often conflicting feelings carers can be left feeling like they have very limited options; either "suffer and lose myself" or "give up caring and live with the turmoil" ... when really there is a spectrum of options and on either end perhaps are these two extremes. This is where a counsellor who has worked with carers can help.

Research tells us that carers are more vulnerable to a significant lower level of wellbeing than any other cohort, measured via the Australian Unity/ Deakin University Wellbeing of Australia Study. Caring for a loved one, a sister or brother, a partner, a parent, a child dealing with a significant health problem makes carers more vulnerable and indeed more exposed to significant trauma, loss and grief.

External and internal pressures work together – emotions are not had in isolation; there is always a bigger context, a connection to other experiences, thoughts, feelings, triggers and meanings. I have found it helpful to understand pressures facing carers in these terms. As a counsellor I help carers to unpack their external and internal worlds and navigate them. Counselling is an opportunity to widen the perspective: to be more aware and therefore open to more options than was once thought possible. Counsellors join with carers in this personal journey to new places where comfort and more peace are found.

Anna Tedesco, 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**.

Murray ^(M2M) to Moyne Cycle Relay

Origins of the Murray to Moyne (M2M) Cycle Relay

The Murray to Moyne Cycle Relay (M2M) had a humble beginning, when in 1987, Hester Woodrup and a team of Port Fairy women challenged her husband, Graham 'Woody' Woodrup, the Port Fairy Apex Club and another team of local identities to ride in relay from the Murray River in Mildura to the Moyne River in Port Fairy. The very first ride, which raised \$10,000 for the Port Fairy Hospital, started at 2pm on Saturday afternoon and with riding through the night, was completed within 24 hours. Right from the first ride Woody saw the potential for the event.

To date, the 2015 Murray To Moyne Cycle Relay (M2M) has had over 1,100 riders and 200 support crew on the road. This represents 150 organisations riding on behalf of hospitals and community services throughout Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia. Over 70 teams competed comprising of 8 to 40 members each. The larger teams split into strategic sub teams to ride the distance.

Seventy teams rolled into Port Fairy on Sunday morning completing the 2015 Murray to Moyne bike relay by riding 520 kms in a bit over 24 hours. All teams were raising money for their nominated health services and were looking to beat last years' fundraising total of over \$1 million.



Above // Vision Super Team ready to go

The 520kms were covered by teams relaying on the three routes over 24 hours. Vision Super team decided that they would ride from Echuca. On Friday afternoon they set off from Melbourne to start from Echuca Saturday morning. The team of 12 rode until dusk, cycling approximately 300kms in the day. Then on Sunday morning they rode from Hamilton to Port Fairy. It was a long ride, with early morning starts prepping for the day's ride. Fortunately, they had great weather for the weekend.

Over the weekend, the support van for the Vision Super cycling team was driven by Caroline Mulcahy, CEO of Carers Victoria and they had an additional five support crew helping with refreshments and assistance with bike repairs.

Why did Vision Super choose Carers Victoria as one of the charities to support?

A number of staff at Vision Super, including their CEO – Peter Rowe, were keen to enter a team in the Murray to Moyne (M2M) Cycle Relay with the purpose of fundraising in support of local health and community services. Vision Super looked for organisations that have community impact and were related to the services provided by Local Government in Victoria. They chose Carers Victoria and Royal District Nursing Services (RDNS).

They raised over \$15,000 and are planning 2015 Murray to Moyne (M2M) Cycle Relay and more fundraising for 2015.



Holiday Grant Program

Generous donor brings holiday joy to carers.

In 2014, Carers Victoria was delighted to receive a large donation of \$50,000 from a very generous donor. This donor, who wished to remain anonymous, requested that we utilise the funds to give some special carers a gift of a holiday.

Understanding and appreciating the enormous contributions that the 700,000 carers in Victoria make to their families and our community, the donor wanted to give back. She explains, "Some wise person once said the three keys to happiness are having something to love, something to care for and something to look forward to. My wish is that all carers can have something to look forward to, given that for many, maybe most, the road ahead looks tiresome and bleak."

"At the request of the donor, Carers Victoria established the Holiday Grant program"

Carers Victoria staff nominated carers who would benefit from a well-deserved break and then a panel selected 33 carers who would each receive \$1500 to book accommodation, car hire or flights with Flight Centre.

The response from the carers was overwhelming. Shelly, who carers for her young son Alex, who has an intellectual disability, says, "I have woken up today still in shock of receiving this wonderful gift from your anonymous donor."

The last two and a half years have been very hard at times, but also full of such joy. Thank you to your anonymous donor."

"You've given me something to look forward to"

We would like say a big Thank You to our donor who gave these carers recognition and a wonderful break. If you would like to help us make a difference to carers by making a donation to Carers Victoria, please speak to our Fundraising Manager Liz Ruggeri on 1800 242 636.

** Please note the Holiday grant program was a once-off program.*



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