

Carers

news

Summer 2017



*Carer
Story*

Sharon's Story

*7th International
Carers Conference*

Caring into the Future: the new world?

*National Carers
Week*

Carers Count

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Message from **Sue**

Welcome to the Summer 2017 edition of *Carers News*.

This edition's theme is 'Recognition and Acknowledgement'. Some of our numerous events during National Carers Week included our valued Mingles, bowling and laser tag for young carers, workshops, presentations and our Inaugural National Carer Counselling Conference.

We were delighted with the announcement by the Andrew's Government that the wide-ranging feedback from Carers Victoria's consultations on a Carer Statement will now inform a Carers Strategy, to be released in 2018.

The Labor Government also announced an additional \$265,000 funding under the Transition Support Package (TSP), a clear recognition of the importance of carers for people with disability.

We celebrated Carers Victoria's 25th Anniversary at Government House, generously hosted by Governor of Victoria, the Honourable Linda Dessau AC. We look forward to continuing our 25 Year celebrations in 2018.

Year end is a time to reflect on achievements. This year, I'm particularly proud of Carers Victoria. Our accomplishments include:

- launch of a Research Agenda 2017-2020 'Valuing Unpaid Care';
- our first regional presence the Mildura Carer Blueprint;
- 11 Government policy submissions;



- our inaugural National Carer Counselling Conference; and
- a 12-month extension of the Disability Support Organisation (DSO) project.

Carers Victoria provided:

- 3,000 hours of counselling,
- 150 peer support sessions,
- 390 carer education sessions,
- 51 provider education sessions, and
- we attended over 50 expos.

In 2018, we will continue to reach as many carers as we possibly can.

For many, the festive season can be stressful. There is always support available by calling our Carer Advisor Line on **1800 242 636**. Carers who require emergency respite after business hours can call **1800 059 059**.

Our office will close for the holiday period from Friday 22 December and will reopen at 8.30am on Tuesday 2 January 2018.

I wish you a safe, enjoyable festive season and a Happy New Year.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Peden'.

Sue Peden
President, Carers Victoria

Victorian Carer Statement Update



Above // Glenn Campbell Carers Victoria, Jaclyn Symes MP, State Member for Northern Victoria and Dan Douglass, CEO, Heathcote Health.

Carers Victoria and the Andrews Labor Government have been working in partnership since October 2016 to research and develop the Victorian Carer Statement, a vital project which will outline how the Government can best support and recognise carers into the future.

As part of the Victorian Carer Statement, Carers Victoria conducted an online survey and 35 face-to-face consultations across the State to find out what matters most to carers in terms of recognition, support, information and potential improvements that the carers' sector needs.

At the National Carers Week 2017 regional launch event in Heathcote, we were delighted with the Labor

Government announcement that the comprehensive and wide-ranging feedback from the Victorian Carer Statement will be used to inform a Carers Strategy, to be released in 2018.

The Labor Government also recognised the importance of carers for people with a disability, and announced an additional \$265,000 for Carers Victoria as part of a second round of funding under the Transition Support Package (TSP).

The Transition Support Package is for organisations to deliver a wide range of readiness activities to support carers, people with a disability and their families, disability workers and service providers transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Jaclyn Symes, Labor Upper House Member joined Glenn Campbell from Carers Victoria for the announcement.

"I'm particularly pleased that Labor has once again provided additional funding for Carers Victoria who does amazing work within our community," said Ms Symes.

"National Carers Week is an opportunity to celebrate the outstanding work of thousands of unpaid carers and their valuable contribution to the community."

Gabrielle Williams MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Carers, Volunteers and Health, further added, "Developing a strategy to support carers and better reflect the responses received in the recent consultations, is a demonstration of the commitment the Andrews Labor Government has to Victoria's dedicated carers."

Pathways for Carers Walk and Dedicated Carers Seat Launch

As part of a 'Pathways for Carers' walk during National Carers Week (15–21 October) Maroondah City Council celebrated by unveiling a new carers seat, which is dedicated to carers. Maroondah Mayor, Cr Tony Dib, officially launched the seat which sits along the Mullum Mullum Creek Trail in Ringwood and features silhouettes representing the role carers play in our community.

Many carers joined Cr Dib, Cr Kylie Spears and Maroondah CEO Steve Kozlowski at the event.

The 'Pathways for Carers' project was established in 2015, in partnership with Uniting lifeAssist, as a way to assist combating common conditions faced by carers which often include moderate depression and poor physical health.

Carers of people with a disability or mental health illness are finding friendship and comfort in like-minded carers as part of a regular catch-up event in Maroondah.

The 'Pathways for Carers' project offers carers the chance to walk, talk and share their experiences while learning about support services available to them.

The walks are held every second Tuesday of the month at 9.30am and every third Saturday of the month at 1pm, leaving from Torrente Café in Ringwood and walking along the Mullum Mullum Creek Trail.

The walks are tailored to suit all fitness levels, take about an hour and are followed by morning tea. It's free



Above // Carers seat is officially launched with Pam (left), Maroondah City Council Mayor, Cr Tony Dib (middle) and Mel (right).

to attend with no RSVP or ongoing commitment required, which provides the flexibility that carers need.

One of the lead walkers, Melinda Spencer said, "The walks are a chance for carers to offload, be educated and empowered, and to discover opportunities to make changes in their lives."

Melinda is a carer herself, caring for her three children who have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and she also runs a social group – Different Journeys for ASD teens and young adults who are 18+.

"The idea behind walking and talking is that it breaks down formalities, releases inhibitions and fosters camaraderie between people," says Melinda.

"By walking, talking and getting back to nature, people can clear their mind, reconnect with themselves and sometimes change their mindset to take on new ideas and opportunities," she said.

Guest walkers attend each event to provide support and helpful information to participating carers.



Previous guest walkers have included representatives from service providers including Carers Victoria, beyondblue, Public Transport Victoria, Gabrielle Williams MP, the Parliamentary Secretary for Carers, Villa Maria, Centrelink, Chrisalis Foundation and EACH. It also provides the chance for service providers to learn about the needs and experiences of carers.

'Pathways for Carers' walks are also available in Boroondara, Knox/Monash, Manningham and Yarra Ranges. Carers can attend any of the walks regardless of where they live.

If carers prefer not to walk there is the option to meet the group at the café afterwards, although be sure to let organisers know ahead of time.

More Information

For more information, including upcoming walk dates, visit the www.facebook.com/pathwaysforcarers or www.lifeassist.org.au/pathways-for-carers or call Maroondah City Council on **1300 88 2233** and speak to the MetroAccess Officer.

The two of us



Above // Karen Faulkner.

Karen

My name is Karen and I am the primary carer of our son Benjamin. He is thirty-eight years old.

Phil and I have been married for forty-two years. We have spent our entire married life in the Western Suburbs of Melbourne. Over this time, we have seen many changes and cultural shifts occur in our area.

I left school midway through Year 10 to work as a public servant in the Taxation Department. I worked there until having children. For a period of time, I was a homemaker. After that, I did casual work in the Library field. Originally, I went to work for six weeks and stayed twenty-five years, loving every minute of the time I spent working.

When I was fifty-four, I took the opportunity to retire. After a while, I decided to work as a community volunteer. I am a community helper in a classroom at a local primary school and I also volunteer at a local opportunity shop.

At a very early age Ben was diagnosed with Sequential Auditory Memory Disorder, now known as Auditory Processing Difficulties (APD). This is a sensory processing deficit that commonly impacts listening, spoken language, comprehension and learning. Ben has difficulty perceiving, phonemic decoding, remembering and retrieving information he hears.

To help with this, there was intense speech therapy and hours of verbal repetition work which I undertook. I attended workshops run at SPELD Victoria (Specific Learning Difficulties) to help Ben overcome this setback.

In 1997 at age 19, Ben was assaulted at a railway station. This was a traumatic experience for him, which resulted in having a great number of psychologist visits where he was diagnosed with Depression and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). To support Ben, Phil and I attended the Peppercorn Group with him. This group is for people with social phobias and OCD. Ben did a lot of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

In the ensuing years, there was a period of stability, where Ben attended University and gained a degree. Ben also travelled the world on a number of occasions. He became Master at Arms of Toastmasters International and he continued on to have a successful career as a Clerk of the Court for VCAT.

In 2013 Ben went for a long awaited and anticipated holiday after a very intensive period of part-time study. During Ben's holiday, he became unwell and decided to cut short his break and return home.

In late August 2014, Ben was admitted into a 24/7 Community Care Unit where he still resides. In the near future, it is anticipated he will be living in a 24/7 facility locally which will enable Ben to continue to increase his working hours. Currently, he is working two days per week for seven hours a day, and is coping. Once Ben is able to sustain a working week of three to five days it is envisaged he will take up shared accommodation.

Phil and I have attended many family meetings with Ben, as his parents and advocates. Our son Cameron has supported us through this process. Our journey through the mental health system has not been an easy or a smooth one to navigate. It has at times been emotional, trying, draining, and at some stages, completely overwhelming.

We have seen some very poor practitioners and doctors.

You must just keep going and searching, trying to find the real gems in the system. These are the people who give you the support, strength and courage to keep going. They are the ones that are caring, kind and understanding and they don't expect anything in return.



Above // Phil Faulkner.



Above // Phil and Karen Faulkner.

Phil

My name is Phil and I am the joint carer with my wife Karen of our eldest son Ben.

Our younger son Cameron and our daughter-in-law also provide a source of ongoing support for us, as required.

Thirty-five years ago, we took Ben to the first of his many speech therapy appointments, and looking back now, all those years ago, it was what parents did'.

In spite of Ben's various medical conditions, he is a very intelligent and capable young man, academically qualified, he has travelled extensively, but he struggles in daily life.

In early October 2013, Ben returned to his workplace after cutting short a fortnight's holiday in Brisbane. He returned to work unwell and I was called to his workplace to take him home. Ben's challenges over time had manifested into what was no less than a major mental health breakdown. His diagnoses being; High Functioning, Broad Spectrum Autism, combined with Short Term Auditory Sequential Memory Loss, OCD, Anxiety and Depression.

In August 2005, I retired from full-time employment after thirty-nine years, to part-time employment where I am at present. I began my working life in 1966 as an Apprentice Electrician and continued working in most fields of the Industry. I retired in 2005, as an Electrical Trade Teacher after twenty-eight years with the Education Department and TAFE.

I now work three days per week in the Electronic/Digital Records Management Industry with a Chartered Accountant.

There have been no dodging bullets. We have by no choice of our own, or Ben's, been plunged into what can only be described as a draconian and frustrating system.

We have had to navigate this system with the support of some very special and incredible people and some totally unexpected sources.

Sharon's story

There are people you meet that have a presence and a way of being that has a significant impact on others. Sharon Upchurch, Co-ordinator of the Ulverstone Support Group is one of those people. While there are many challenges for her family, her approach to them is not that they are burdensome; they are simply things to work around, so that she and her family can get on with their precious time together.

As well as co-ordinating the Support Group (and providing its members with friendship and support outside the group if needed), Sharon is involved in the 2017 Mindfulness Interest Group, and supports her sons to participate in activities for young carers. Sharon often supports fellow carers in the community to connect with Carers Tasmania. Sharon shares her caring journey...

I was a young carer and the eldest of four children and Mum had multiple chronic illnesses. I had a lot of responsibilities and did a lot for my siblings. I began caring for my husband not long after he was diagnosed with Motor Neurone disease twenty one years ago. I dress, shower, toilet, and feed him, lift and transfer him. We have three teenage boys with learning disorders, one has ADHD.

There are plenty of appointments to keep us busy, and I manage my time very tightly. I spend a lot of time navigating the complex system of services we need to use as well. A recent example has been negotiating who is responsible for supporting my boys with their learning needs; is it the role of the education department or is it an NDIS responsibility?

One of my biggest challenges is just getting everything done each day, and sometimes this can mean 'burning the

candle at both ends'. It can be stressful and overwhelming. Equally as difficult is the lack of understanding from others. Those who don't understand exactly how much I am doing sometimes ask questions like 'When are you returning to work?'

I find it hard to accept the ambitions and dreams that haven't been possible for me. I wanted to work as an early primary teacher or child care worker, and later to do social work, but I ended up in retail which I loved.

I didn't ever want to be a nurse or be in any other caring type role, but as a carer I am in a way fulfilling the role of a nurse, a taxi driver, a secretary and much more. I am regularly at the

hospital due to my husband's falls, which often result in injuries, and also when he has bouts of pneumonia.

We both worked hard before this happened to us and were able to attend concerts and travel. We had dreams of travelling around the country as grey nomads, but now everything has changed — and for the rest of our lives.

I am rewarded now appreciating that time is so precious. It makes spending time together a high priority for us. And I do have a sense of purpose; this is what I am to do in this season of life. We still work hard to go on holidays and enjoy day outings with the boys; it's just on a much tighter budget.

Kerry and I recently celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary. We went to Canberra and stayed overnight at the Jamala Wildlife Lodge because my husband loves big cats. It was extremely expensive, and took a long



Above // Sharon Upchurch and family.

time to save for, but it was wonderful to sleep overlooking the whole zoo. We could hear the lions from our room! Basically, we let nothing stop us and we have lots of dreams. Our next is that we want to go to Disneyland, and we have started budgeting for that. All the while we send our boys to a private school, as we feel their learning needs are better met there. The school doesn't charge us the full rate, but have nominated an amount for us to pay. We felt we could make a slightly higher contribution, and so we pay an amount we are comfortable with.

My faith gives me the strength I need each day. Our church is a wonderful support and we have a great support network of friends, family and service providers, such as Carers Tasmania. Amongst caring, I am a consultant for three companies, coordinate a bible study group and am quite involved with Carers Tasmania.

Time for me is extremely important. I have a few hours to myself twice a week. One Saturday a month I spend the day scrapbooking, and two or three weekends away per year keep me sane.

I feel so fortunate to live in a country that has a wonderful health system, and at this time, because even one hundred years ago this situation we find ourselves in would have been way tougher.

This is not the life I expected, but I have my family and am living each day enveloped in love. There is much to be grateful for.



National Carers Week Round Up

Every Carer Counts: National Carers Week 2017 was celebrated throughout Australia from 15–21 October with numerous events held across the country. This year's theme was 'Carers Count'.

Carers Victoria

Highlights included:

Mingles — Carers Victoria kicked off National Carers Week with a full house for our first Mingle where over 130 carers in Werribee enjoyed lunch and were treated to entertainment from the acclaimed female magician and mentalist, Cath Jamison. The theme of this year's Mingle events was 'Ride the waves of life and discover some magic'.

Regional Launch — held in Heathcote where the Labor Government announced the intention to develop a Victorian Carer Strategy and an additional \$265,000 for Carers Victoria as part of the second round of funding under the Transition Support Package (TSP).

Young Carers — over 20 young carers attended a Bowling and Laser Tag event in Maribyrnong which was a great success and a chance for these carers to enjoy some time out and to have fun with their peers.

National Carer Counselling Conference — the very first event of its kind where over 120 carer counsellors, psychologists and social workers from around the country came together to discuss and present themes of 'Diverse work in a specialised field'.

Carer Support Group Activity Grants — over 150 groups were provided with grants this year.

Education Services — the Carers Victoria Education Services Team ran a massive 31 sessions over the week.

Presentations — several presentations were held across the week by Carers Victoria's staff members to organisations including Melbourne Water, Myer and the Department of Health.



Above // Presentation to Karingal Carers Choir.

Carers South Australia

South Australia celebrated with many events including luncheons, barbeques and afternoon teas.



Above // Wayville staff making their presence known in Rundle Mall.

Carers South Australia continued

The Hon. Mark Butler MP, Member for Port Adelaide, South Australia hosted a morning tea for carers at Royal Park. Carers visited the Gladstone Gaol, a Victor Harbor afternoon tea. Carers in the Eyre Peninsula enjoyed a day bus trip and visited the Dutton Bay Woolshed Museum.



Above // The Hon Mark Butler (Federal Member for Port Adelaide) hosted a morning tea for carers.

Carers Tasmania

Carers Tasmania supported the many carer support groups across the State to hold an activity or lunch to celebrate National Carers Week. These lunches and activities were held across the week and certainly showed the enthusiasm of carers to get out and about in their communities. These events were a highlight for carers and staff alike and included young carers in the North West of the State battling it out in a laser tag arena, Deloraine carers trying their hand at a spot of fishing, the Southern Dementia support group visiting their local bowling alley, the Mental Health carer support group and Laughing Lunches support group teaming up to go on a joyful river cruise down the Derwent River and of course all the wonderful sit down lunches and leisurely walks.

This year National Carers Week coincided with Seniors Week, Carers Tasmania held three Qigong in the Park activities to coincide with the theme of being outside and enjoying Tasmania's beautiful parks and reserves. Qigong is gentle exercise to music that aims to promote balance, wellbeing and relaxation of the mind. These sessions were led by a qualified instructor in one of Tasmania's beautiful outdoor parks in Hobart, Launceston and, despite the rain, Ulverstone.



Above // Deloraine carers, dementia support group, my time support group, St Helens support group.



Above // Qigong in the Park, Hobart, Simone Favelle, Project Officer - Carer and Community Engagement and Young Carer Co-ordinator, Carers Tasmania, Robyn and Wayne, carers and Janine Arnold, CEO, Carers Tasmania.

The Inaugural *National* *Carer Counselling* *Conference 2017*

Diverse work in a specialised field – Counselling Carers in Practice



The Inaugural Carers Victoria National Carer Counselling Conference was held at the William Angliss Institute in Melbourne on Thursday 19 October. It brought together counsellors, psychologists and social workers from across Australia to focus on the therapeutic and counselling approaches demonstrated to be effective with unpaid family and friend carers.

The conference program was dynamic and varied. The day consisted of plenary sessions, keynote speakers, workshops, case studies and panel discussions to showcase best practice and high standards of carer counselling. The keynote and workshop presentations were delivered by leaders in the field of carer issues and carer counselling.

All sessions reflected the conference theme 'Diverse work in a specialised field – Counselling Carers in Practice'.

A highlight of the conference was a question and answer session featuring AFL Women's star and carer – Moana Hope.

A powerhouse of Women's Football, Moana first pulled on the jumper for Victoria in a Senior Representative game at age 16, which culminated in All Australian selection. Since then, Moana has achieved much success in her stellar football career.

With footy in her blood, a passion she shared with her late father, Gary, Moana has always loved playing AFL.

With Women's Football participation at an all-time high since the announcement and inaugural AFLW season last year, Moana took her goal kicking prowess from

suburban grounds to the big stage, representing the biggest sporting club in Australia, Collingwood.

Since the AFL Women's Exhibition Game in September 2016 where Moana starred for the Western Bulldogs in their win against Melbourne, kicking 6 goals, the interest in Moana and her journey has been amazing. A highlight was as episode of ABC's Australian Story which focused on the lives of Moana and Susan Alberti, which many football and non-football followers were drawn to.

An Operations Manager for a Traffic Control Company, it is common for Moana's day to start at 4am in order for her to fit in her training, playing, work, and family commitments which she is devoted to.

Moana lost her father to cancer when she was 13, has a mother battling several illnesses and is the full-time carer for her disabled sister, Lavinia.



Above // L to R: Belinda Hawkins, Australian Story Producer, Jennifer McAughtrie, Senior Manager Carer Services, Annie Hayward, General Manager – Policy, Strategy and Public Affairs, Anna Tedesco, Counsellor, Linda Espie, Counsellor, Moana Hope, AFL Women's star and carer, Glenn Campbell Carers Victoria, Mary O'Mara, Counsellor, Kath Davine, Team Leader – Community Engagement and Ticia Hamond, Operational Support Officer.

During the conference, Moana shared generous insights into what life is like as a full-time carer for her sister, in addition to juggling her work, sporting and family commitments.

The conference keynote speaker was Ms Susan Beaton – Psychologist, Suicide Prevention Specialist Consultant & Mindfulness Coach.

Susan is a psychologist with thirty years' experience working in the Suicide Prevention field, currently as a Consultant. Susan has been a national advisor to beyondblue for four years and Lifeline's National Office for seven years and has worked both in Australia and the USA, mostly for NGO's in: training and education; research and evaluation; service innovation, development and implementation; standards; policy development and advice; Board representation. Susan was elected to the Board of the American Association

for Suicide Prevention (2008–2011) and is an advisor to the Australian Government's revised 'Suicide Prevention Framework Living is For Everyone' suite of documents. In 2011 Susan received a Churchill Fellowship to study alternative models of suicide crisis support overseas.

Susan presented Australian statistics on carers and suicidal ideation to help counsellors understand the circumstances that may contribute to a carer thinking and feeling this way. Counsellors need to know how to best work effectively with a carer who is suicidal.

This presentation promoted compassionate, client-centred service provision and a reinvigoration of attention towards the interpersonal and system-based environment which is critical to supporting a suicidal person. Susan's keynote presentation was incredibly well received and the feedback she received was remarkable.

Carers Victoria would like to thank all of the speakers and delegates who attended the conference. We received overwhelming feedback and we look forward to planning the next event.



7th International Carers Conference 2017

7th International
carersconference
ADELAIDE CONVENTION CENTRE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA
04-06 OCTOBER 2017

The conference theme was *Caring into the Future: the new world? Caring into the future* was reimagined, providing a catalyst for innovation and collaboration; sharing improvements in the way we support unpaid carers, care-recipients, their families, networks and communities.

In addition to recognising and learning from past achievements, the conference focused on the future, the challenges and opportunities ahead, and showcase of in policy and practice.

The 7th International Carers Conference brought together key stakeholders across a broad range of community and business sectors: policy-makers, community leaders, business leaders, researchers, grassroots advocates, practitioners, consumers and carers.

Delegates travelled from across Australia, across the Asia Pacific region and across the globe, along with national and international high-profile speakers to engage in a meeting of minds.

The conference, which has been deemed extremely successful by academia, keynote speakers, international delegates, presenters and the community service sector, included:

- 600 delegates
- 15 keynote speakers
- 141 concurrent sessions
- 40 display booths
- a Gala Dinner

David Miltz, CEO, Carers South Australia presented **'The Changing World of Supporting Carers'**.

Annie Hayward, General Manager – Policy, Strategy and Public Affairs, Carers Victoria and Rose Miles, Manager Carer Support Services, Bendigo Health presented the pilot project, **'A caring Mildura: A partnership approach to creating a town that cares'**.

Anne Muldowney, Senior Policy Advisor, Carers Victoria and Nick Mann (Polaris Lawyers) presented **'The challenge of Australia's National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) for carers – obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disability (UNCRPD) and comparisons with the UK and Norway'**. In addition, Anne presented a session on **'Literature review: Carers of older people and consumer directed care'** and participated on the NDIA panel session as a panel member.

Gabriel Aleksandrs, Policy Advisory Mental Health, Young Carers and Diversity, Carers Victoria and Jenny Martin, RMIT University. Presented **'Experiences of carers of LGBTIQ people living with mental illness'**.

Angela Smith, Development and Carer Support Officer, Carers Tasmania, had her abstract chosen to present at the conference **'The role of the informal family carer giver in palliative care'**.

Videos of the keynote presentations and access to concurrent session presentations are available on the website www.carersaustralia.com.au/international-conference.



Above // Aboriginal welcome.



Above // Ara Cresswell, CEO, Carers Australia and Chris Hill and carer.

A big thank you...

Carers from different States were fortunate to be sponsored to attend this event.

We thank the generosity of our supporters for making this happen.

"I enjoyed the information and thought the international speakers were very informative. I also thought the information displays in the foyer were helpful. I also enjoyed the chance to talk with carers from other areas of South Australia."

Carer, South Australia

"I wish to thank you and Minister Bettisons for making it possible for me to attend the Carers International Conference. I gained so much information and knowledge from other countries, especially Norway, where they are endeavouring to integrate people suffering from Alzheimer's, into society with special cafés where apparently these people have fun and socialise, how necessary that is too. Many thanks once again, as it was very memorable for me."

Carer, South Australia

"It was diverse, really enjoyed the setup of the conference. The gala dinner was fun. It was beneficial to meet other carers and service providers. We had the opportunity

to provide interviews representing young carers which was exciting. I felt honoured to represent the young carers of Victoria at this conference."

Shaan, Young Carer

"We were able to utilise many things for our caring journey that we learnt about, such as My Health Records and the fantastic current technology that is available.

We were grateful for the opportunity to attend and the other plus it was nice just to be ourselves for a few days without clock watching, running around after children, cooking, cleaning and other domestic chores. Sometimes in our caring role we can forget that we too are people who are allowed to have fun."

Melinda, carer of three children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

"It has touched my heart to know how much you care about carers. My life as a carer is very full on and very demanding and frequently very intense. By sponsoring me to attend the Convention you gave me an extremely special gift that I will always appreciate. Your gift gave me the most pleasant luxury of time to be me, time to speak with and to interact with carers from Australia and all over the World.

I was totally amazed to hear from an inspirational young man, Christopher Hills (with very severe Cerebral Palsy) and equally inspirational father, Garry Hills. Christopher is a 20-year-old video editor and owner of Switched-On Video Editing. WOW!

Artificial Intelligence enabling Carers to Care better for their Disabled Family Members.

Dr Jordan Nguyen, Biomedical Engineer, Inventor, TV writer and presenter was amazing.

Adam Jahnke, Founder and CEO of Umps Health talked of amazing technology that enables Carers to monitor an elderly and frail family member and alert you if they haven't been up at the usual time, no lights switched on, no kettles turned on etc., indicating something is wrong."

"On Thursday morning at a breakfast presentation, we listened to the most amazing gentleman called Rikki who has Parkinson's Disease. His informative and very humorous approach to living with Parkinson's Disease was amazing."

Sandra, carer for her husband and son

10 Ways to Self-Care



1 Nourish Yourself:

Eat foods that nourish your body. A balanced diet includes fruit and vegetables.

2 Sleep:

Get enough sleep. Stick to a sleep schedule even on weekends. Practice a relaxing bedtime ritual. Stop using all electronic and screen devices one hour before bedtime and put them in another room. During the hour before bedtime, dim the room lights and your body will slowly release melatonin.

3 Water:

Remember to drink enough water. The daily recommendation by most health professionals is two litres.

4 Take a Bath:

Enjoy a relaxing bath with bath salts and a plush bath pillow to support your neck.

5 Use Aromatherapy:

Aromatherapy can reduce anxiety, ease depression, boost energy

levels, speed up the healing process, eliminate headaches, induce sleep and strengthen the immune system.

6 Get active:

Do daily exercise, enjoy a walk outside or try a few yoga stretches.

7 Games:

Play Sudoku, puzzle games or a board game with friends and family.

8 Get Creative:

Find a creative pursuit: Drawing, painting, writing or cooking.

9 Celebrate:

Celebrate small wins. Realise that big goals are not going to happen overnight. By focusing on small wins, you will keep up your motivation.

10 Gratitude:

Keep a gratitude journal. Write daily about one thing which you are grateful for. Research has shown that writing positive events helps create lower stress levels.¹

¹ According to a study by researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of Florida, having participants write down a list of positive events at the close of a day – and – why the events made them happy – lowered their self-reported stress levels and gave them a sense of calm at night. (Thrive by Arianna Huffington).

Carers Victoria



Celebrates 25 years

On Saturday 21 October Carers Victoria celebrated 25 years of caring for Victorians who are supporting someone with a disability, mental illness, chronic illness, drug addiction or are older with carer needs. Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria hosted a cocktail party at Government House on Monday 23 October.

Below is an excerpt from the speech delivered by the President of Carers Victoria's Board, Sue Peden:

"The act of caring for another is perhaps one of the most fundamental of human existence. We naturally care for our children, partners, parents, siblings, extended family and friends. But at any given moment, someone in our lives may require a level of care which goes beyond the everyday, due to age, chronic illness, disability, addiction or mental health issues. Our ability to cope on our own can become extremely challenging and in some cases, isolating.



Above // L to R: Vicki Casha, Michael Casha former Young Carer and Jacqueline Leorke, Carers Victoria

It was the recognition of this, 25 years ago, that drove Reverend Schulz and a small group of committed carers to establish the Carers Association Victoria. Their founding mandate for the organisation was as elegant as it was concise: **To ensure that the needs of carers are identified and met.**

It is the strength of this vision that continues to provide our 'true north' 25 years later.

From humble beginnings, we have evolved to become the foremost organisation advocating for carers across Victoria and providing services and supports.

We anticipate the next 25 years will be challenging, especially in the context of major reforms. We will make sure that we stay the distance, and are always there at the side of our State's carers. "

Carers Victoria would like to thank our dedicated team of staff, volunteers, board members and partner organisations who have contributed to our success over the past 25 years.

A very sincere thank you also to the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria for hosting this celebratory event.



Above // L to R: Former Carers Victoria CEOs Caroline Mulcahy, Glenn Campbell and Maria Bohan.



Above // Hon. Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria addressing attendees at the celebrations at Government House.

Mildura Carer Blueprint

Carers Victoria, General Manager, — Policy Strategy and Public Affairs, Annie Hayward and Bendigo

Health, Rose Miles, Manager Carer Support Services, made the following presentation, 'A caring Mildura: A partnership approach to creating a town that cares' at the 7th International Carers Conference in Adelaide in October:

"The initial goal of the Mildura Blueprint project was to design and implement a community engagement strategy that identified carer concerns and ways to address these. It soon became evident that supporting carers would benefit the broader community, so the goal then expanded to building a carer community across the whole of Mildura.

We undertook this project for several reasons. Firstly, the diversity of sector reform impacting on our communities. Our aged care, disability and mental health sectors are undergoing major reforms which all have different required outcomes, different implementation times, different methods and different phasing.

They have commonality of intent, being designed to streamline service delivery and enhance consumer directed care and participation. Their common denominator is their size — they are all very, very big.

An example of the complexity is the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). It's staged roll out will occur in Mildura in 2019, but already existing in the south of the region. This is exacerbating concerns and confusion for carers in Mildura.

Secondly, at a joint Carers Victoria/ Carer Support Services consultation in Mildura in September 2015, carers identified that the local service providers were not working together. We know that service providers do, in fact, work together.



BUILDING A CARING COMMUNITY IN MILDURA



Following the first face-to-face consultations with carers, a Working Group was established representing carers, service providers, local government and Carers Victoria. Carers Victoria also worked closely with the local Carer Support Groups.

Members of the Working Group then undertook extensive consultation with other local stakeholders to further explore possibilities, extend the concept and engage support.

The first phase of the project culminated in the 'Your Say' Carers' Forum in August last year. About 60 carers and service providers developed the enhanced goal of a Caring Mildura by identifying gaps in service delivery and developing action priorities.

These are included in the 'Building a Caring Community in Mildura' Blueprint, under four themes: Carer information and services, Housing, Transport and Community Initiatives.

Carers Victoria took the lead development role, with resource support from Bendigo Health Carer Support Services. Broadly based community participation was vital, so we engaged Carer Support Groups, service providers and politicians across three levels of Government. We use existing structures. We have: liaised with existing carer groups, consulted with existing stakeholder and service networks, followed up personally with people unable to attend meetings and held briefings with anyone who is interested.

We have shared the Blueprint with the Northern Mallee Primary Care Partnership and are very excited that Mildura Rural City Council has undertaken to link the Blueprint with their Community Health and Wellbeing Plan.

We have established a Blueprint Steering Group to guide prioritisation and implementation of Blueprint — plans for quick wins and longer-term tasks in this first year.

The community is increasingly citing the Blueprint as a basis for carer service improvements."

Carers Victoria has established its first regional office in Mildura at 159 Langtree Avenue, Mildura. The Community Project Coordinator, Bonney Dietrich, is ensuring the Blueprint gains 'on the ground- traction' in the local community. The office is open each Tuesday and Wednesday. Phone: **03 5023 7081**, Mobile: **0458 264 616** and email: bonney.dietrich@carersvictoria.org.au

Carers Victoria would like to share the Mildura Carer Blueprint model in other regions of Victoria and we are currently planning another project in the southern part of the region.

Mingle 2017

Ride the waves of life and discover some magic at Mingle 2017

The 2017 Mingle events were a great success with 400 carers coming together across Victoria. Events were held in Werribee, Geelong, Bendigo and Phillip Island.

This year's theme was 'Ride the waves of life and discover some magic at Mingle 2017'. Carers were entertained by Carers Victoria staff members Alex Athanasiadis and Kate Outhred who explored the concept of 'riding the waves' and managing stress using Mindfulness. Carers then discovered some magic with the acclaimed female magician and mentalist, Cath Jamison.

Carers enjoyed a light lunch and had the opportunity to meet and mingle with other local carers and to talk to Carers Victoria and other local service providers about the services and supports available for carers in their area.

The Mingle events aim to help carers learn about services and supports, provide a social opportunity and the chance to meet new friends, help carers learn about health and wellbeing strategies and, importantly, recognise and value carers.

We were fortunate to have special guests Maree Edwards MP, State Member for Bendigo West and Chris Kelly, Manager Community Wellbeing from City of Greater Bendigo at our Bendigo Mingle and Kathryn McBride, Acting Manager Community Carer at City of Greater Geelong at our Geelong Mingle.

Carers Victoria would like to acknowledge and thank the Bass Coast Shire Council, Wyndham City Council, the City of Greater Geelong and generous donations from our members and supporters for their support of Mingle 2017.



Above // Carers enjoying themselves at the Werribee Mingle event .



Above // Alex Athanasiadis entertaining carers.



Above // Carers enjoying themselves at the Bendigo Mingle event.

"Often you don't know other carers so it is good to be social once in a while!!! Our 'Mindfulness' knowledge was put to the test, with an exceptional score of 8/8. It made us feel positive about ourselves, happy and enjoy the company of other carers!!"

"The laughs, entertainment and great organisation. Thank you for some time out and all the laughs (smiley face symbol!!)."

"Fun, happy day out with like-minded people."

"Having time away from my caring role and catching up with other carers."

"Meeting other carers in a relaxed atmosphere. Wonderful venue and great food. Good fun and loved the dancing. Thank you for a lovely day, appreciate all the hard work."



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