

President's message



Welcome to the first edition of Carers News for 2012. I look forward to another year of talking with you about what matters to carers.

There are a number of government initiatives that will be of interest to carers in NSW in 2012, initiatives like the implementation of the NSW Carers (Recognition) Act,

further developments in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), the establishment of the new Mental Health Commission, the shift of responsibility for those over 65 (55 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) from the State to the Federal sphere and more.

And of course, at the heart of all these new initiatives is the carer. Future success or failure depends on carers truly being partners in care, and that means being listened to, being able to give and receive information, being recognised and considered. We know that is what is needed. Governments have identified that is what is needed. But is that knowledge being acted on now after almost five years of the NSW Carers Action Plan 2007-2012?

The NSW Carers Action Plan outlines the NSW Government's commitment to carers over five years. Five key priority areas were identified:

1. Carers are recognised, respected and valued.
2. Hidden carers are identified and supported.
3. Services for carers and the people they care for are improved.
4. Carers are partners in care.
5. Carers are supported to combine caring and work.

One of the most important is the aim to ensure 'carers are partners in care', but what is really happening in towns and cities, rural and regional areas of our state? What hope is there for successful implementation of new initiatives if carers as 'partners in care' remains a good idea, rather than everyday practice?

What has been your experience? Has the philosophy of carers being 'partners in care' reached the understanding and interest of your local GP? Has she or he really engaged with that concept?

What about your local hospital? Perhaps you are included in discharge and future treatment planning while your family member is in hospital but find that inclusion stops once your cared for person's care is transferred to a GP?

Are you listened to and kept informed only if you care for someone under 18 or have enduring guardianship over your cared for family member?

The establishment of the new Medicare Locals is an opportunity to embed good practice in working with carers and ensure the concept of 'carers as partners in care' in primary care is a consistent reality. Carers NSW is advocating for this to happen.

We are very interested to hear your stories. What difference has being a 'partner in care', or not, made to your experience as a carer and to the wellbeing of yourself and the person for whom you care?

How will this government evaluate the success of the Carers Action Plan? What has it learned from the past four years that will inform the implementation and success of new initiatives?

Let's work together to ensure 'carers as partners in care' is a reality in every element of our health and welfare sectors: in policy, in service delivery and evaluation of that service delivery.

We have an interesting year ahead. I look forward to hearing from you, and don't forget you can also write a letter for publication in the newsletter about anything that is on your mind.



Laraine Toms
President

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