

# President's Report



Happy New Year to you all and welcome to those of you receiving our newsletter for the first time. We hope you will enjoy *Carers News* and find it a source of practical, helpful information, carer stories to remind you that you are not alone, and good humour. Our newsletter links us all, make it your own by writing to us and sharing your letters and stories.

A new year always brings both hope and fear. As I write Queenslanders are facing their worst flood disaster in history and our thoughts are particularly with carers and those for whom they care during this terrifying time. Our deepest sympathy goes to those who have lost family members and friends. Many have lost homes and businesses. The months ahead as Queensland rebuilds will be profoundly difficult for all but for carers especially. Carers NSW will do everything we can to assist Carers Qld and the carers they support.

For NSW 2011 brings a State election. We encourage you to speak or write to your local member and those standing for election to ensure they know and understand what carers' needs are. Make your voice heard! We will be working hard with and for you to speak to all members from all parties to highlight the need for, amongst other things, carers to have real choices, supported accommodation, more and better respite and easier access to integrated services.

This coming year we will draw inspiration from the 2010 Clare Stevenson Lecture delivered by Sue O'Reilly in November. I encourage those of you who were not able to

be present to read or listen to the lecture on our website. Go to [www.carersnsw.asn.au](http://www.carersnsw.asn.au) and click on **Sue O'Reilly delivers the Clare Stevenson Memorial Lecture** under the heading What's New. Sue's profoundly moving lecture inspired and confronted us all.

Sue said:

*'Something is very wrong in Australia. There is a societal blindness and lack of concern or awareness about what people with severe to profound disabilities need to function in society that poisons the lives of many affected by disability. I realise this is a wild generalisation, but as a society, I believe the majority of Australians don't want to know about that aspect of human existence that is disability, and people with disability.'*

Whether you agree or disagree with Sue's ideas and observations her challenge to us all to confront the social injustice people with all disabilities and their carers face can't be ignored. This coming year will see Carers NSW continuing to support the National Disability Insurance Scheme, more and better facilities for our frail and elderly, mental health services that are carer supportive and inclusive and indeed all carers of all people with the full and diverse range of needs. We continue to work towards community recognition that anyone, anytime can become a carer and that caring must be a shared community responsibility if we are to remedy the wrong that Sue identifies.

Laraine Toms  
President  
Carers NSW

## Contents

Remembering Averil Fink	page 1	Look after yourself	page 11
President's Report	page 2	Policy update	page 12
News	pages 3-4	Inform yourself	page 13
Looking back	page 5	Talk to others	page 14
Carers Voice	pages 6-7	Noticeboard	page 15
NSW votes	pages 8-9	Help support us	page 16
Inform yourself	page 10		