



Welcome to the first edition of Carers News for 2014.

This year our newsletter will again reach many people across NSW and beyond, not only members of Carers NSW, but the full diversity of people in our communities.

Of course our membership itself is very diverse. It is not only carers who look forward to reading Carers News. It seems people are more aware than ever before that becoming a carer is something that can happen

to anyone, anytime. There is greater interest in carers, their lives and backgrounds and the contributions they make not only to the members of their own families but to the whole community. There is more awareness too that more carers will need to take up more responsibility for caring for the elderly and people with chronic illness and disability into the future. We work to transform that interest and awareness into active support for carers now.

Carers themselves are very diverse, reflecting the diversity of our communities. No two carers are alike, no two caring situations are the same, no one service or support meets every carer's needs.

Acknowledging this, our staff conference this year has diversity as its theme: understanding diversity, being able to respond to diverse carer need, being prepared and ready to work in diverse ways. It is in acknowledging and learning about diversity of carer experience, what that means and how we can best respond to it, that gives Carers NSW strength and confidence as we go about our work.

We also acknowledge the need for diversity of skills and ways of thinking on our Board. Such diversity strengthens our governance capacity and strategy development.

Because this is the first edition of Carers News for the year I would like to offer a particular welcome to new members.

If you are a carer we hope that Carers NSW can provide you with support, practical information,

friendship and the knowledge that whoever you are, wherever you have come from, whatever you do, whatever your age or caring circumstances, you are not alone.

If you are a community member we welcome your interest in carers – be assured that when you raise the issue of carers' needs in your neighbourhood, your workplace, your Facebook page or on Twitter, it helps to bring carers to the attention of our whole community. That is the first step to action towards recognition and better supports for carers.

If your organisation, be it a large corporation or small private business, has become a member we not only welcome you but we want you to know we can work with you to support the carers in your workplace, not only so they can better balance their caring and work responsibilities but also so you can recruit and importantly, retain, valued workers.

We look forward to this year with optimism. Our Board and staff are working to ensure we are ready for the diverse challenges that lie ahead. Whatever happens regarding government policy, or changes to ways in which services are delivered, our determination is to ensure the carer voice is always heard and acted upon; that carers are not overlooked.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laraine".

Laraine Toms
President