The journey so far......
The impact for carers........

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Together Program Coordinator
with Kevin Paton, Samaritans and
Laurel Lambert ANSA Carers Support Group
1. The program in review. History, origins, design and aims.

2. The model: successes and challenges with CSGs and RAOs: Showcasing the Samaritan Foundation. Speaker Kevin Paton

3. The highlights, benefits to carers and challenges: Showcasing the ANSA Carers Support Group. Speaker Laurel Lambert

4. The future for together...
Online processes
Forum, resources, blog, e-learning

Liaison and support for local CSGs

Regional Assisting Organisations (RAOs)

Website

Quality

Education and Training

Recruitment and sustainability education. Face to face and e-learning modes

Range of carer disability groups and activities. CALD, Aboriginal, Torres Straight Islander, LGBTI and young carer groups
1. The program in review.
History, origins, design and aims.

The *together* program came about in response to a recognised need for peer support for carers of people with disability.

The Department of Family and Community Services (Ageing, Disability & Home Care) commenced funding to Carers NSW for the *together* program in July 2012.
The overall aim of the *together* program is to develop, coordinate and resource a network of carer support groups for people who are providing care to someone with disability.

Individual established groups

New groups just setting up
1. The program in review.
History, origins, design and aims.

The *together* program is designed to:

Assist in the **creation of sustainable support groups** for carers of people with disability across NSW.

Provide education and training opportunities for facilitators.

Provide a network of **disability carer support groups** linked in with Regional Assisting Organisations (RAOs) across NSW.
Geographic distribution of disability carer support groups across NSW.

Number of Carer Support Groups

- Young Carers
- Aging Carers
- Parent Carers
- CALD
- LGBTI
- Aboriginal
- Other

n = 873

Geographic distribution of disability carer support groups across NSW.
Local Health Districts (LHDs)

Mapping exercise identified over 870 active support groups for carers of people with disability, across 16 NSW LHD’s.

Map of together groups and RAOs
In 2013, Seebohm et al found that self-help and peer support groups were beneficial in a variety of health areas, including chronic illness, mental health, disability and caregiving.
Peer support and self-help groups share common principles of change, empowerment and self-esteem (Pistrang et al, 2008).

Not just environments where one member helps another, but where every group member gains some insight and awareness into their issue through the support of others. (Vanderavort & Vanharberden, 1985).

1. The program in review. History, origins, design and aims.
“A requirement of volunteer groups is the experiential and lived knowledge, in which group members have a unique understanding of the problem and hence can offer empathy, advice and support, which cannot be provided from other sources” (Pretto & Pavesi, 2012).
NSW Carers Strategy 2014-2019

VISION

Carers and caring are respected and valued

Carers have the time and energy to care for themselves

Carers have the same rights, choices and opportunities as other members of the community
Commitment 2.3 Funders and providers of carer peer support programs will be brought together to extend the variety and reach of peer support programs in NSW through:

Building a comprehensive database of carer peer support groups that can be used by telephone helplines, referral services, online service directories and app developers

exchanging best practice in facilitating peer support

seeking other opportunities to improve peer support by working together, particularly for small communities.
Groups first expressed interest in the *together* program in June 2013. In February 2014 there were less than 10 groups registered with the program. As at 01 May 2015 there were 250 Carer Support Groups (CSGs) for people caring for someone with a disability registered with the *together* program across NSW.

There are 24 active Regional Assisting organisations (RAOs) that support and assist the CSGs in their local area.
Liaison and support for local CSGs

Regional Assisting Organisations (RAOs)
In 1984 the Samaritans work began as a few key services including emergency relief, a family centre and op shops.

VISION
For communities where there is love, peace, justice, reconciliation and dignity for all people. Where there is care for the vulnerable and their environment and where each individual has the opportunity to contribute and participate fully in community life.
Samaritans grew significantly since the early 1980s, and now operate over 100 support services throughout the Central Coast, Newcastle, Hunter Valley and Mid-North Coast regions. In 2012 services spread to Mudgee in the Central Western NSW.
Local Health Districts (LHDs)

Map of together groups and RAOs

Samaritans Foundation-
Hunter LHD NSW
2. Showcasing the Samaritan Foundation
Throughout these regions Samaritans offer support to a number of those in need including young people and families, those with disability or mental health challenges and the wider community.

Samaritans has over 600 staff and more than 400 volunteers across the regions in which we
Commenced with MoU under *together* in July 2014

MoU to support up to 12 groups including:
- General support groups
- 2 Aboriginal Carer Groups
- 1 CALD Group

Currently: 13 groups registered
- 7 receiving funding through Samaritans
- 4 not receiving funding
- 1 under NSW Carer funding
Key activities:
- Contacting all Hunter groups registered under Carers NSW together
- Designing a funding application form for Hunter participant groups
- Confirming the requirements re guidelines on use of funds and acquittal
- Responding to enquiries re the expenditure and use for funding
- Administering the funding allocations
The reality of my role!
(with limited connection to groups!)

Networking opportunities limited between groups in;

- distances,
- separate agendas,
- different goals/ aims/ activities,
- limited memberships,
- agreed upon and mutually attractive activities

Position added into my work responsibilities that impact on prioritising

Limited opportunities to connect to groups
FUTURE DIRECTIONS?

- Coordinating the 2014/15 reconciliations.
- Looking at funding for next 12 months?
- Developing or facilitating links between groups!
- Planning a networking meeting for end June!
- Ensuring increased group access per MoU
2. Showcasing the Samaritan Foundation

SOME KEY ISSUES

- Planning support for those eligible under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- Sustainability of the groups over time
- Attracting new members
- Cost and availability of and/or access to transport
Planning issues in ageing - in wills, deeming rules for assets and moving into aged care,

Planning for those you are caring for, to maintain quality of life to their end-of-life!

Getting to know the together network and what other groups are doing and what we can learn from each other

Changes in access to respite
Carer Support Group (CSG) Facilitators and Members
For service providers, working with carer support groups can provide:

- Efficient communication with clients/carers
- Insight into the caring role
- Feedback on your organisation/program
- Understanding issues/landscape of caring

3. The highlights, benefits to carers and challenges
Not all Carer Support Groups are the same!
3. The highlights, benefits to carers and challenges

For carers, belonging to a carer support group can provide the opportunity to:

- *Learn* practical aspects of care
- *Gain support* though sharing experiences and feelings with others in a similar role
- *Discover* ways of alleviating stress and relaxing

- *Learn* about community services and how to access them
- *Understand* more about the condition and needs of the person being cared for
- *Have social contact* away from the continual demands of caring
3. The highlights, benefits to carers and challenges

- Peer support for carers.
- Partnerships between carer support groups and organisations that support carers.
- Facilitator training, debriefing and networking to assist support group facilitators to lead groups.

- Education & training for facilitators and for group members on a broad range of topics.
- Guest speakers to present to groups on request.
3. The highlights, benefits to carers and challenges

- Resources & materials in best practice carer support group provision
- Improved community links through establishing and maintaining referral pathways for carers of people with disability.
- Financial assistance to assist with some group costs.
- Promotion via the *together* program website and support group network.
- Networking opportunities between carer support groups across NSW
3. The highlights, benefits to carers and challenges

Carers report that participating in peer support groups is the best support for their wellbeing as other people in the same situation understand what they were going through.
3. The highlights, benefits to carers and challenges

Having a break from caring and spending time with other carers can help to stop the isolation that some carers feel, and support groups for people caring for others in the same situation are useful ways to exchange information and strategies.

Peer support creates social connections with other people who understand the challenges that carers face and the rewards that they get from their caring role.
3. Showcasing the ANSA Carers Support Group  
- Adults needing supported Accommodation

“THE STRENGTHS THAT COME FROM WITHIN”

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."  
~ Helen Keller
3. Showcasing the ANSA Carers Support Group

The ANSA group has existed for over 4 years & has a sole purpose, ie: to build a good life for our family member/s with disability by enabling them to live in independent arrangements of their choice.
FUTURE PLANNING FOR CARERS

Within the group, carers have found their strength, their resilience & a thirst to extend on their knowledge base. Most are keen to give back to the community who supported them when they were in need.

Generally, this is manifesting into advocacy/training roles. For those who are ready, a personal development plan is being developed to enable them to reach their personal goals.
3. Showcasing the ANSA Carers Support Group

GROWTH UNDER THE TOGETHER PROGRAM

- We have been in receipt of support from the *together* program for greater than 50% of that time

- Our mission is all but spent and we are currently reviewing both our future as a group along with our carers own personal aspirations.
3. Showcasing the ANSA Carers Support Group

INTERCONNECTIONS WITH THE TOGETHER PROGRAM

Access to relatively small amounts of financial resources has allowed us to subsidize the cost of administration & venue hire.

A small allocation of funds is isolated for transport that allow us to remain connected with other local carer groups, thereby ensuring that increased populations are benefiting from information exchange.
Above all, the money allows us to purchase lunch.

While this may seem ordinary, it is here that members have their greatest opportunities to bond together as they mingle naturally and learn to care about each other.

This is the glue that joins us together as one and energizes us, month after month.
3. Showcasing the ANSA Carers Support Group

INTERCONNECTIONS WITH THE TOGETHER PROGRAM

Of more importance are the educational outcomes that emerge from this project & the links it has helped form between ourselves & others.

The tele-link feature allow us to glean insight into a range of topics & provides valuable awareness of challenges, resolutions & news bulletins, thereby breaking down isolation.
INTERCONNECTIONS WITH THE **TOGETHER** PROGRAM

Networking with Carers NSW has spearheaded ANSA members into a ‘travelling roadshow’ across NSW & other states, informing carer groups & industry providers of our experiences with the NDIS.
3. Showcasing the ANSA Carers Support Group

INTERCONNECTIONS WITH THE *TOGETHER* PROGRAM

We have been invited by NDIS to advise on a range of matters in NSW, Victoria and Queensland.

Two of our members with disability have been appointed to the NDIS Local Advisory Group to advocate for people with intellectual disability.
3. Showcasing the ANSA Carers Support Group

INTERCONNECTIONS WITH THE TOGETHER PROGRAM

We are working with Carers Australia to initiate the Carer Conversation project which will be launched soon.

ANSA has supported Carers NSW to harvest local carers’ experiences of the NDIS which has assisted in their current policy development.
We have been collaborating with UNSW on a national research project regarding housing, accommodation & NDIS. They have recommended to the Federal Gov’t that the ANSA model is a highly efficient and effective gateway to housing options for those with disability.

Members are nurturing new groups who wish to replicate the ANSA model. An exciting new Coffee and Possibilities initiative has now commenced in Queensland.
THANK YOU, TOGETHER PROGRAM

YOU ARE APPRECIATED
Challenges ahead...

- More than 250 registered groups brings challenges to funding model. Continue to grow or cap the number of groups?
- Engaging RAOs in relevant LHDs to assist and support the CSGs
- Supporting and enabling the network of CSGs and RAOs in the program
4. The future for *together*...

**Challenges ahead...**

- Ability to make carer support groups truly sustainable—including CALD, LGBTI, YC and Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander carer groups, in NSW LHDs where they are mostly needed.

- Delivering levels and methods of training to meet ongoing need for RAOs and CSG facilitators.
Thank you!

Carers NSW
www.carersnsw.asn.au
Carer Line 1800 242 636
References available

http://www.togethersupportgroups.net.au/
References


References


Not all Carer Support Groups are the same!