

## Carers get a say in NDIS planning

You can discuss your needs as a carer in the NDIS planning process. As well as people who care for a person with a disability, carers who are under 18 are being encouraged to think about their needs, as are people caring for a person with a mental illness because mental illness is seen as a psychosocial disability.

### Get started

Step one is to use a checklist to help you collect your thoughts as you prepare for the initial planning meeting that will occur as you and the person you care for enter the NDIS.

The Carer Checklist, created by Carers Australia helps you describe the support you provide; including what you are doing, how often, and how it affects you.

Step two is to write your Carer Statement so other people can understand what you do now and the part you wish to play. This is looked at by the NDIA (National Disability Insurance Agency) and taken into account when assessing the supports required.



Carer Services can assist carers to plan for NDIS

The Carer Checklist and Carer Statement can be found on the Carers Australia website under NDIS & carers [www.carersaustralia.com.au](http://www.carersaustralia.com.au).

### Planned workshops

Most of Melbourne's south will move to the new scheme during 2018. We will keep you up-to-date with the latest news via information sessions for carers. In October and November this year, we will

have sessions for Chinese and Vietnamese carers. We are keen to ensure all community members are aware they can have a voice in their NDIS planning.

Culturally diverse groups and others in the community are welcome to contact us if you feel an information session may be useful. Contact Michael White, Alfred Health Carer Services Disability Coordinator to talk further: [mi.white@alfred.org.au](mailto:mi.white@alfred.org.au)



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Carer South News is published quarterly by Alfred Health Carer Services for carers who live in Melbourne's Southern Region

Carer Support and Respite



**1800 052 222**



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Sign up for Carer South News via our website  
[www.carersouth.org.au](http://www.carersouth.org.au)



Service providers can request multiple copies by emailing  
[info@carersouth.org.au](mailto:info@carersouth.org.au)

We encourage carers, friends and families to tell us your stories so we can listen to what is most important to you and perhaps share them with others in our community. Phone us on **9076 6439** or email [info@carersouth.org.au](mailto:info@carersouth.org.au)



Alfred Health Carer Services acknowledges the traditional Aboriginal owners of country throughout Victoria. We pay our respects to them, their culture and their Elders both past and present.



Our organisation values diversity and is committed to providing an accessible service and a safe and respectful environment for our staff and clients.

▶ If you care for a person with a disability or mental illness refer to our website for more information and to subscribe to weekly e-newsletters. Friday EXTRA is

for carers of a person with mental illness and Respite South is for carers of a person with a disability. Look under Who do you care for [www.carersouth.org.au](http://www.carersouth.org.au).

## Carers get frustrated too

On 2 May, join us at the Toomah Community Centre, Pakenham for a morning session suitable for carers of an older person or a person with dementia. Caring for a family member or friend can be demanding and tiring, causing frustration at times. This workshop will explore ways to manage feelings of frustration and how to make some positive changes.

Phone **9212 3000** to book.

A light lunch is included.

## Are you an adult caring for mum or dad at home?



Do you feel a bit tired or overwhelmed at times? You may be interested in a study that will ultimately uncover ways to support people in your situation. Your insights could help others down the track. It's called *Families in Later Life* and if interested, you and your parent could take part. All up, there's a commitment of 8 hours spread over about 12 months and you will be reimbursed \$100 at the end of the study.

Deakin University is leading the government funded study and is keen to hear from you. Check out the website [www.fills.org.au](http://www.fills.org.au) or call the research team at Deakin on **9246 8544**.

## Culturally sensitive respite

Eleni was worried about using respite. Her Greek-speaking mother was used to Eleni's care and said she would not go into a home.

When Eleni had to go into hospital, her mother confessed she would be frightened to be left alone at night. Eleni and her mother visited a small home that offered short-term overnight stays and a Greek specific day group. After the visit her mother was very comfortable with the idea of staying. She rang Eleni to say how much she was enjoying it and came home brighter and more willing to socialise regularly. She was very happy to stay again whilst Eleni had a holiday with her son.

### Culturally sensitive respite

More than ever aged care homes are providing culturally sensitive care. The Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre runs activity groups for people from many cultural backgrounds including Vietnamese, Filipino, Sri-Lankan, Arabic, Afghan, Polish, Spanish, Turkish and Romanian. There are Greek-speaking groups at Baptcare Southaven in McKinnon and also Clayton South, organised by Fronditha Care. Some local councils also run culturally sensitive day groups.

In Springvale there are two aged care homes suitable for people from an Asian background. Their staff is multicultural; they have Asian influenced menus, visits from Buddhist monks, and grow popular vegetables and herbs in their garden.

A home in Dandenong has both Western and Indian menus and also provides Halal certified meals.

In Hallam there is a home that caters for Arabic speaking people of Christian faith, in Keysborough there is a Sri-Lankan oriented facility, and in Dandenong a facility caters for people from Russia

and other Eastern European countries.

“Respite really can make a difference,” says carer support worker, Maree. “Luis is a good example. He cares for his wife Carla but when she was unwell she didn't want to go anywhere and he couldn't leave her. So we had a Spanish speaking care worker visit and she really enjoyed it. From there she felt safe enough to go with the care worker to an activity group and met with other Spanish speaking women. These outings lifted her mood and gave Luis space to do the chores and have some time-out without worrying. It also meant they had some new things to talk about.”

### How can we help?

Maree says it is common for people to be unsure about using respite and then be surprised about the social benefits. “It is hard to be away from the person you care for. People worry that they won't be looked after properly or they'll be lonely. It can be more difficult for people from non-English speaking backgrounds. Many cultures keep the caring role within the family which can be especially hard for migrants. There may be fewer family members to share the care and the younger ones can be busy with work and study. Whilst no-one can replace the care provided by family, carer support workers can help families find a place that suits their needs.

“One of our carer support workers can talk with your family about what's important to you. They can take you to have a look at some homes and help you to ask important questions of the staff there. They may organise a trained carer who speaks your language to get to know your family member and visit them when they are in respite care. It is comforting to



*It helps to try respite for a short period*

know they can be understood and supported even when you're not there.”

To learn more about culturally sensitive respite, phone **1800 052 222** or contact the Southern Migrant & Refugee Centre on **9767 1900**.

### What is respite?

- Respite is taking a break. It involves finding others to care for your family member or friend.
- It might be at home.
- It might involve the person going to a social group or staying at a residential care facility.

### Why do you need respite?

- Respite helps in emergencies, when a carer is sick or in hospital. This most often occurs in a residential facility.
- Respite can enable you to go on holiday, attend family events or take some time to renew your energy.
- It can be good for carers and the person you care for. Meeting other people and socialising can be positive for you both.

## Workshops change lives

“Life changing” is one way carers have described our workshops. Alfred Health Carer Services hosts carer workshops every month.

The most comprehensive of these is Creative Ways to Care. This program is held over seven half-day sessions to provide support and strategies for carers of people living with dementia. We invited Kellie Law, who attended Creative Ways to Care during 2016 with her mother-in-law Pam, to share their story.

### A family story

Pam and Peter were childhood sweethearts, and their love for each other was as strong as the day they met. As a family we were inspired by their love. But as Peter's dementia worsened, we could see Pam struggling more and more. The man she loved was slipping away in one sense, but he was still there.

Pam needed support, but she felt duty-bound to care for Peter, as he had always done for her. We were talking about looking into courses on dementia when Pam saw an article in her local newspaper about Creative Ways to Care. So one Friday (with six more to follow) we headed off to Rosebud not knowing what to expect. We made up a group of 10, nine women and one man.

The course was much more than just learning about dementia. It covered behaviour management strategies, diversion techniques, activities to avoid boredom. It was a support group for each other, we learnt so much about ourselves. It was also about the carers, and all the services that are available for families because it is not something one person can physically and emotionally deal with on their own over a period of time.



*A much-loved family photo of Peter and Pam*

It was a safe space to be ‘us’ and express our true inner feelings without judgement. The first person to admit they were angry with their loved one for having the disease, was the key to a newly formed support group, (and we continue to catch up). Carers having support, whether it is family, a friend, or an organisation is a vital tool for coping.

Having dementia explained in detail, and in a non-medical way was a much more realistic way of looking at the disease, and we were reminded that it wasn't a life path Peter had chosen.

The course leaders were there to support and educate, but it was never like a formal classroom setting. They didn't watch the clock and stop people talking if they were sharing, they never told you that you were wrong, or say “no, or don't do...”, they would say it's OK, next time try this, good job trying, don't give up.”

Pam and I shared what we learnt with the rest of our family, and I would have to say that this course made the last stage of Peter's life

much more bearable for everyone involved. Due to the course we had such a different outlook and understanding of Peter's experience rather than focusing on what we were going through. Two key things we learnt were:

1. You can't change the person with dementia, and they cannot change, but you CAN change your response (often changing the reaction).
2. Most behaviours are caused by the disease and cannot be stopped or changed by the person with dementia.

Dementia has a stigma that needs changing; more education and awareness is desperately needed. Understanding the person with dementia's perspective is a huge step forward for everyone.

There are many more workshops on our website or telephone **1800 052 222** to enquire or to have information posted to you.

[www.carersouth.org.au](http://www.carersouth.org.au)

## In brief

### Cultural Diversity Week is 18-26 March



Cultural Diversity Week is Victoria's largest multicultural celebration, featuring a week-long program of events in metropolitan and regional areas. Check out what's on at [www.culturaldiversityweek.vic.gov.au](http://www.culturaldiversityweek.vic.gov.au) and come along to Victoria's multicultural festival, Saturday 25 March at Federation Square in Melbourne city.

### Support for students

The Victorian Government is providing financial support for eligible students to attend camps, sports and excursions. \$125 per year is available for primary school students, with \$225 per year for secondary school students. There's also a special consideration eligibility category.

You need to be the holder of a Veterans Affairs Gold Card or be an eligible Centrelink Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card holder, or be a temporary foster parent.

Application forms are available at schools or on our website under News.

### Let's talk about Mental Health

Come to a **FREE PUBLIC EVENT**, *Let's talk about Mental Health* on Friday 21 April 2017, 10.00am – 2.00pm in Frankston.

Come and be inspired by people's real life experiences, browse through stalls and get information about mental health, drug and alcohol supports, advocacy, employment, counselling, respite and housing services. Everyone is welcome and refreshments will be served. While you're there, come and say hello to Carer Services' mental health team. It's all happening in the Function Centre, Frankston Arts Centre. For more information, phone Judy Anderson at Peninsula Health on **9238 8634**.



Language services will be on hand at Ageing Expo

### Ageing well for all

On Saturday 29 April, the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing will host the *Ageing in Australia Expo 2017*, 10.00am – 3.00pm, Melbourne Town Hall, to connect older people and their families to aged care providers and services.

People will be able to find out about support services, ask questions of aged care services, government departments, peak organisations and ethnic community organisations relating to their care and wellbeing.

Language services will be on hand for people for whom English is not their first language.

This is a **FREE PUBLIC EVENT**, however tickets are essential. Phone **8823 7979** or book online [www.culturaldiversity.com.au](http://www.culturaldiversity.com.au)

## Diary date

17 May, 2017 is International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia with the theme "Love makes a family". IDAHOT Day marks the day in 1990 when the World Health Organisation removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.

### LGBTI Aged Home

Just down the road from The Alfred in Prahran, an aged care provider is about to begin construction on an innovative new aged care living and retirement home called Lifeview Marigold, specifically marketed to LGBTI people and friends. Lifeview CEO Madeline Gall says, "As Australia's only private provider of aged care to be Rainbow Tick accredited, we feel we have a responsibility to spread the word on inclusive aged care services and educate the wider community on how they can access appropriate

and respectful care. "We're proud to lead the way on providing trusted and inclusive care and hope in the future other providers will also step up to the mark in this area", she added.



*"...Australia's only private provider of aged care to be Rainbow Tick accredited..."*

## Everyone has a story

Ines and Jenny\* have spent most of their adult lives together and, following Jenny's diagnosis of Younger Onset Dementia (YOD) at 53 are adjusting to many changes.

They have challenges like any couple but also some fears unique to their lesbian relationship.

### Jenny's story

I worked at David Jones for many years. I loved the people contact and being close to beautiful things. I'd always been a writer too and kept a diary, so when I was 45 I signed-up for a creative writing course. I then went on to work in a library and delivered books to people in the community and I ran the pre-school story time sessions.

I was the household organiser. I paid bills, shopped online. Ines doesn't drive so I was the one who planned our weekend getaways. Before my diagnosis, there was a time where we kept getting lost. One day, I was pulled over by the police because I was driving so

slowly, and we had to leave our car in the Yarra Valley because I had forgotten to pay the vehicle registration.

I've stopped driving now and having to retire was very hard. I go to a planned activity group once a week though. We have the use of a bus to get around. We all know one another and get on well. A few have had their dementia increase significantly so can no longer come.

In the beginning, the amount of form filling was overwhelming. I don't know how Ines coped with Centrelink, the Aged Care Assessment Service, Carer Card, Carer Payment, applications for respite. Thankfully Carer Services staff are really good at this and take a lot of the worry away. And there's a bit more support for people with YOD too; involving the people around them.

There's no doubt dementia is disabling and life-changing but I really try to think about what I can do rather than what I've lost.

### Ines' story

We have friends who have experienced discrimination, but on the whole people have been respectful of our relationship. You do worry though when a personal care assistant first comes to your home, what they will make of your living arrangements. We have never hidden our relationship but we are private people. You learn that when someone becomes unwell, it can be hard to maintain privacy.

Our family and friends support us but in many same sex relationships, especially those without children, family try to override the wishes of the partner or the person with dementia.

A male friend of ours who passed away recently was not offered hospital chaplaincy because they assumed he wouldn't be a man of faith.

In the early days of diagnosis, we used to clash a lot. I would get angry at Jenny if she broke something or couldn't find it. I was exhausted by day's end with her constant questions.

I try not to think about the next steps. We use the many services available to us, home help, hydrotherapy, physio and I have massages and regular podiatry appointments. My goal is to care for Jenny for as long as possible at home. I am optimistic for the future. There has been a lot of research and discussion with the LGBTI community of late and I suspect services are becoming more consumer focused as a result.



*Diversity prompts rethink of care services*

\* Names changed for privacy

# Alfred Health Carer Services Manager

In this issue, we introduce new Carer Services' manager, Justin Pacey.

## You joined Carer Services in January this year?

Yes, I am delighted to join Alfred Health Carer Services and look forward to building upon the already great work of the team. There is a lot happening within the aged, disability and mental health sectors with the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Aged Care Reforms and Integrated Carer Support Services. Rest assured we will keep carers at the forefront of any work we do.

## Call for 2018 Carers Calendar



Do you like taking photos? Do you take a break for yourself by getting outdoors? Why not send us a picture to go in our 2018 Carers Calendar? The calendar is sent out in November to some of the carers who have used our service, or carers can request a copy. We are looking for pictures of beauty taken in Melbourne's south. They must be digital and of good enough quality to reproduce in print. See [www.carersouth.org.au](http://www.carersouth.org.au) under News for more information on picture specifications. Send them by **Friday 2 June 2017** to [info@carersouth.org.au](mailto:info@carersouth.org.au) or on a CD or memory stick to:

Communications Officer  
Alfred Health Carer Services  
Caulfield Hospital  
260 Kooyong Road  
Caulfield 3162

## What is exciting about the role?

It is a wonderful opportunity to lead the deeply committed team at Carer Services and work together through a number of innovations and changes set out by the organisation and government. With a background in health, I come with a strong understanding of the challenges faced by carers, families and their broader communities and will ensure we make any improvements and transitions as smooth as possible.

## What is on the horizon for 2017?

Our biggest goal is to continue to understand how broader system change is impacting carers day-to-day. It is very important that carers feel they can talk to us, not just about their immediate challenges but also about the issues around navigating the sector or advocating on their behalf. I come with a commitment to service improvement and innovation and will be working towards streamlining our processes to minimise duplication and reduce delays in accessing the services you need to support you in your caring role.

## How will you achieve that?

We will continue to build upon the great Alfred Health initiative of Timely Quality Care to deliver a high quality service in an efficient and timely way. We are also keen to hear your stories, issues and challenges through our "Everyone has a story" initiative which you will see more of in Carer South News and on our website. It is a communication campaign where we invite people to tell us what we should be aware of to better meet their needs.

## How can carers get involved?

We rely on carers to give us feedback so we can improve the service we deliver. Currently you provide us with feedback through



*Justin Pacey, Carer Services' Manager*

the website, at events and by sending feedback forms at the end of an episode of support. We want to create more opportunities for this to happen.

Please feel free to contact us by email to [info@carersouth.org.au](mailto:info@carersouth.org.au) or telephone on **1800 052 222** if you have any suggestions or ideas for improvement. Later in the year we will facilitate some feedback sessions to hear more about your experience of the service and provide you with an opportunity to meet other carers. We appreciate any feedback you have and if you are interested in being part of these sessions please contact us.

## Can you share your philosophy with us?

I believe the only constant is change and we must embrace it and not fear it. Our world is ever-changing and it is vital we remain adaptable and open. I live by the philosophy of treating others as I would like to be treated, which is a simple but effective approach to life. I think we can all learn something from each other, no matter who we are or where we are from. I feel very lucky to live and work within such wonderfully diverse and culturally rich communities.

Hi my name is Archana. I'm from India and I care for my 16 year old son who is on the autism spectrum.

I love cooking as I know it makes my whole family happy. My culture is important to me. Indian traditions, ceremonies and festivals are very colourful, and the most important festival of the year is Diwali, the celebration of lights and fireworks. It falls in October or November each year depending on the cycle of the moon. It's a tribute to the Hindu gods and honours the victory of good over evil and brightness over darkness.

## Hyderabadi Chicken Biryani

### Ingredients

- 4 cm piece ginger, peeled, roughly chopped
- 6 garlic cloves, peeled
- 95g (1/3 cup) natural yoghurt
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tsp ground chilli
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 1/3 cup slivered almonds toasted
- 2 small green chillies, finely chopped
- 1/3 cup roughly chopped coriander leaves, plus extra, to serve
- 1/3 cup roughly chopped mint leaves, plus extra, to serve
- 1.4 kg whole chicken, cut into 8 (or chicken pieces)
- pinch of saffron threads
- 2 tbsp ghee (clarified butter)
- 60ml (1/4 cup) vegetable oil
- 4 red onions, sliced
- 2 dried bay leaves
- 3 cloves
- 2 cinnamon quills
- 3 cardamom pods, bruised
- 1 tsp caraway seeds
- 600g (3 cups) basmati rice, soaked in cold water for 2 hours

Preparation time:

Soaking time 2 hours

Marinating time 30 minutes



Process ginger and garlic in food processor to form a paste.

Transfer to bowl and add yoghurt, turmeric, ground chilli, garam masala, green chillies, half tsp salt and half the coriander and mint, and mix well.

Remove skin from chicken, coat in marinade and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Place saffron in bowl with 2tbsp warm water and set aside to infuse for 30 minutes

Heat ghee and oil in frypan with lid over high heat. Lower heat, add onions and cook, stirring for 15 minutes until browned. Remove onions, and drain on paper towel.

Add almonds to the pan and cook, stirring for 2 minutes until golden, remove from pan to paper towel.

Remove all but 1tbsp oil in pan and reserve the rest. Allow excess marinade to drip off chicken and add to pan on low heat.

Place saucepan of cold water on high heat. Add bay leaves, cloves, cinnamon, cardamom and caraway seeds. Add rice to the pan and bring to boil.

As soon as rice boils, strain half of rice and spread over chicken. Drizzle over some of reserved cooking oil, top with half of the fried onions and half of the fried almonds, then sprinkle over remaining coriander and mint.

Continue cooking Biryani over very low heat and continue boiling rice for a further two minutes or until tender.

Drain remaining rice, place on top of Biryani. Drizzle over saffron water, cover with tight-fitting lid and cook for 20 minutes, until chicken is cooked and rice is tender.

Top with remaining fried onions and serve sprinkled with coriander and mint.