

## Services for carers

A clearer understanding for carers was the objective for our name change during August. The Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre Southern Region is now known as Alfred Health Carer Services.

As well as being a little easier to say, the new name reflects the more extensive range of services available for carers funded by state and Commonwealth departments.

Manager Anne Clark explained that assisting carers comprehensively is the goal. "We help with respite (an organised break from caring) but we also do so much more towards supporting carers in their important role," Anne said.

"We are working hard on improving the journey for carers from their first phone call. Planned or urgent respite is one part of what we do. We recognise carers need support to stay well in their caring role. We help carers navigate the aged, disability and mental health sectors. We also assist Young Carers. Geographically, the Southern region, our catchment, covers a quarter of the state's population."

Carer support worker, Eileen Hennessy, explained that "carer services" describes a range of options, such as having someone to talk to, free carer workshops and events where carers can share ideas, and access to practical information and referrals to other services where required.

"The more tools a carer has, the more empowered they can be. A carer support plan helps carers develop a pathway forward with specific strategies and services engaged to assist them to gain more control, organise a break for themselves, and recognise the need to invest in their own health and wellbeing."



Carers have a range of options

Anne Clark said the service will continue to operate as usual and contacts will remain unchanged, including the all important 24 hour **1800 052 222** number that carers should call as the first point of contact.

## We've changed our name

- Known as Alfred Health Carer Services from August 2014.
- Offices in Caulfield, Dandenong and Frankston.
- Phone **1800 052 222** to link to respite, support & information, referrals, carer education and events.



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# Awareness for all

Spring finds our service very busy with lots of events and activities coming up. September is Dementia Awareness Month. On Thursday 25 September, there is a free information session on memory loss at St Kilda Town Hall. Why not come along? Did you know that not all memory loss indicates a person has dementia and that some memory loss is associated with medical conditions which can be treated? To register call **9209 6397**. You can also see our website for information and for more event and free carer workshop listings [www.carersouth.org.au](http://www.carersouth.org.au).

October is also busy with events for Victorian Seniors Week. Search Victorian Seniors Week online [www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au](http://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au) to see what's on.

We are also hosting some events of our own for Mental Health Week (5–11 October) and Carers Week (October 12–18). Read about them on page 7 and 8. This year, we are hoping to encourage people in a caring role who may not know about our service, so if you know someone who might need support please pass on the details and encourage them to book now as places are filling fast!

We have decided to acknowledge Dementia Awareness Month in a small but significant way with our **30 Satisfying Things to do in September**, or any month! Imagine how good you may feel if you could do one thing every day!

1. Read a book
2. Go to a movie
3. Take a brisk walk
4. Give someone a massage
5. Organise a coffee or play date
6. Paint your nails
7. Have a good stretch
8. Do a jigsaw puzzle
9. Go to a garage sale
10. Visit an art gallery
11. Get a haircut
12. Write a poem
13. Plant some flowers
14. Take some photos
15. See a play or musical
16. Invite a friend over
17. Go to a market
18. Draw, paint or do woodwork or craft
19. Put some music on and dance
20. Try a new recipe
21. Have a swim
22. Enrol in a workshop/course
23. Meditate
24. Pack a picnic and go to a park
25. Clean out your underwear/sock drawer
26. Buy yourself a gift
27. Do something you have never done before
28. Write a list of the things to be grateful for
29. Sleep in
30. Tell someone you love them

## SUPPORT FOR CARERS

Are you caring for a family member or friend who is an older person, or who has a disability, mental illness or dementia?

Alfred Health Carer Services is a part of Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres nationally, providing a single point of contact for aged, disability, mental health and young carers. We help people to access carer support services (including urgent respite care). All enquiries to:

**1800 052 222\* (24 HOURS)**

\*Freecall except from mobile phones

We assist family carers who live in the local council areas of Port Phillip, Stonnington, Glen Eira, Bayside, Kingston, Casey, Cardinia, Greater Dandenong, Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula.

We have offices at Caulfield Hospital and in Frankston and Dandenong.

### This Newsletter

Carer South News is published quarterly by Alfred Health Carer Services.

### How to contribute

Stories, news and photos are welcomed. For submissions, feedback and changes to the mailing list, phone **9076 6439** or email [info@carersouth.org.au](mailto:info@carersouth.org.au).

### Email

[info@carersouth.org.au](mailto:info@carersouth.org.au)

### Website

[www.carersouth.org.au](http://www.carersouth.org.au) for community news, events, workshops, carer support groups and other resources.

### Mail

Carer South News  
Alfred Health Carer Services  
Caulfield Hospital  
Caulfield House  
260 Kooyong Road  
Caulfield Vic 3162

# Aged care changes

We can help you to understand the services available in the community for carers. You may need help in a few different ways – to relieve stress, understand payments, organise a break for yourself or plan for the future.

Knowing what is available means that we can set you up for success. As such, we have been reviewing changes within the Aged Care and Assessment Service (ACAS), effective from July 1, 2014, as a result of ongoing aged care reform.

ACAS is a Commonwealth funded assessment and care planning service for people over 65 and for some people under the age of 65 including those with Younger Onset Dementia.

Health professionals such as nurses, occupational therapists and social workers visit people in their homes or in hospital to provide comprehensive assessments, information, advice and referrals to a range of supports.

These include council and home nursing services, and approval for eligibility to access residential care for respite or permanent living, or to obtain a home care package. The assessment is free and may involve aged care medical consultations.

In brief:

- Home care packages will now be income-tested. If you are self or part-funded, you will need to complete a Centrelink Assets and Income (Combined) Assessment SA 457 form to establish the fee. (Pensioners and concessional clients are not required to complete this form as Centrelink already has this information). Assistance can also be provided by Centrelink by phone.
- If you completed a Centrelink Asset form prior to July 1, 2014 you will need to complete the new form.
- ACAS will continue to reassess the level of care required for residential respite.
- They will re-assess home care packages approvals if



We can explain changes to carers

the older person has progressed from low to high level.

- ACAS will continue to provide approvals for permanent care but now without the distinction of low and high categories.
- The link between high and low level care delivered in the community is no longer a guide for the level of care required in a residential aged care setting. Instead, the aged care facility will determine the level of need required within their specific setting. This will be done in consultation with family, the GP and community health workers.
- Approvals for permanent residential care are no longer time-limited.

To contact an ACAS nearest you, call:

- Caulfield **9076 6314**
- Kingston **9265 7888**
- Mt. Eliza **9788 1276**

The new Centrelink form is at:

[www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/forms/sa457](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/forms/sa457)  
or call **13 27 17** for direct support.

For information and assistance regarding aged care, visit [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au) or call **1800 200 422**.

For other questions or if you feel you need some help and support generally in relation to your caring role, please call us on **1800 052 222**.

## Mindfulness Helps Carers Carry On

We provide opportunities for carers to meet and explore common themes. Our free education program is one way we do this. We regularly offer new and interesting workshops so carers can meet in a warm and friendly environment.

A recent addition to our program is 'Mindfulness Helps Carers Carry On', which ran in July for the first time. Health psychologist, Dr Lisa Engel, facilitated the workshop with 17 carers, all of whom either care for a person over the age of 65 or a person living with dementia.

"I was privileged to be a part of this half day workshop, and to experience the interactions and responses of this highly engaged group. All were eager to learn more about Mindfulness practice, and to come to an understanding of how they can apply the techniques of 'being in the present moment' in their everyday lives," said group host and carer support worker Anna Poulivos.

"Participants gained insight into the various ways in which we can all take a few moments in our day to focus on our wellbeing, and to know that it is okay to do what works best for us as individuals."

The importance of, and relevance to all carers of self-compassion was a talking point. The larger group broke into smaller groups on several occasions. Anna commented, "It was heartening to experience the chatter, laughter and discussion from the groups. The connections and understanding from all was evident and Lisa was effective in her ability to summarise the sentiments and to allow each person to participate to the extent that they felt comfortable with."

Participants said their motivation was to learn more about coping strategies. They enjoyed:

"Meeting other people who are also coping with problems related to being a carer."



New mindfulness workshop proves popular

"Sharing experiences with others; I'm so grateful to have the opportunity to learn about coping mechanisms – Lisa's a great group leader."

"To be present in the moment; to be compassionate with myself."

"The opportunity to connect with others and Lisa's style of presentation."

"Listening to others in the group."

"Learning to concentrate on real versus transitory and listening, learning and being with people who are on the same journey."

The next 'Mindfulness Helps Carers Carry On' workshop will be held in Frankston on 27 November, 2014. You can register your interest by contacting Hayley Johnson on 8781 3413.

See more workshops listed on the Education & Training pages on our website [www.carersouth.org.au](http://www.carersouth.org.au).

## Do you care for a young person with high support needs?

The Recreational Respite Program supports carers of a young person with disability who is aged between 6 and 24 years of age and who has high support needs. It provides funding for use primarily over school holidays, to help the young person access community activities where possible. It assists carers to purchase limited services to support once-off or short-term respite needs.

Applications for the summer holidays will open on Thursday 23 October and close Thursday 20 November, 2014.

Find out more at [www.respitesouth.org.au](http://www.respitesouth.org.au) or contact Michelle Holmes on 8781 3401 or email [mi.holmes@alfred.org.au](mailto:mi.holmes@alfred.org.au).

# The power of your voice

A recent forum “Balancing the Scales” in Mornington showed that “carer power” is alive and well. The forum, organised by carers, for carers and supported by local disability, mental health and carer services was a valuable information event attended by over 180 people. Some of our staff Val Mayer, Michelle Holmes, Hari Gritzalis, Lindy Alcorn and Ewa Sadujko attended the event and spoke with many of the carers who attended.

Members of the Peninsula Carer Council (PCC) and Community Lifestyle Accommodation Limited were central to the organisation of the event which brought together local MPs as well as speakers Bruce Bonyhady, Chair of the National Disability Insurance Agency; Laurie Harkin, Disability Services Commissioner and Lynne Coulson-Barr, the new Mental Health Complaints Commissioner.

The forum provided the opportunity for families and carers of people with a mental illness or disability to have a voice in the lead up to the imminent State Government elections.

Carers questioned the politicians and bureaucrats for answers to some of the issues that have been affecting their lives for many years. They asked what action will be taken to provide:

- on-going accommodation and support for older people with disabilities who are currently living at home with their ageing family carers
- residential respite beds that remain available for respite rather than being used for semi and permanent placements
- accountability of services including mandatory



- reporting to ensure instances of abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation are stopped
- quality accommodation for people with a mental illness
- access to advocacy support for families/carers

Aline Burgess, Secretary of the PCC said, “Mental illness is the ‘Cinderella’ of the health system. There are too many carers who are worn out, too many staff overworked and too many people with mental illness who are homeless or not getting treatment.”

A participant at the forum agreed, “Not everyone feels comfortable to lobby politicians about their concerns but, if you have ever thought you should speak to your local MP, these next few months would be a good time to make an appointment to express your thoughts regarding the Disability and Mental Health systems. If this face-to-face approach is not for you, then sending a letter as an individual or from your carer support group is also a powerful way to raise issues. Now is a good time to make the most of your democratic rights.”



## Carers Calendar 2015

Doing something creative is a terrific way to take a break for yourself. We would like to congratulate carers Wendy, Lisa, Lee, Sean, Isabella, George and Val who contributed to our new and beautiful Carers Calendar. We thank them most sincerely for being a part of it. The calendar will be launched during Carers Week.

We invite you to contribute to future calendars, details available at [www.carersouth.org.au](http://www.carersouth.org.au).

## Learn to relax

The Support for Older Carers (SOC) program assists carers over the age of 50, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers 45+, who care for adults with a disability, by providing opportunities to connect socially with other carers as well as providing information and support.



Carers share relaxing time

As part of this program, there are a number of free or low-cost meditation and wellness groups across the southern region:

**Beaconsfield:** This yoga and meditation class meets fortnightly on a Thursday from 1.00pm to 2.00pm at Just Be Yoga and Meditation Studios in Beaconsfield.

**Bentleigh:** This yoga and meditation class meets fortnightly on a Tuesday from 11.00am to 12.00pm at Moksha Yoga Studio in Bentleigh.

Please call Michael Boymal on **9076 6359** for more information or to register for these classes.

**Mornington:** This yoga, meditation and gentle exercise class meets weekly on a Wednesday from 11.30am to 1.00pm at Bentons Square Community Centre in Mornington.

Please call Ewa Sadujko on **8781 3410** for more information or to register for this class.

We regularly host events and activities for carers of people with a disability, so please visit [www.respitesouth.org.au](http://www.respitesouth.org.au) to sign up for the weekly e-newsletter, so you can stay connected to what's on.

## A carer's experience

We regularly host retreats with the aim of providing carers with a relaxing break in the company of others who may share similar experiences. Marilyn Wilson came to a retreat in Sorrento. We are most grateful for her feedback and this is a little of what she had to say.

*The value to both myself and other carers I have spoken to in the group has been enormous. As a carer you feel isolated and your whole life seems to revolve around your caring role.*

*I have for the past year been caring for both my parents, feeling as though I am just surviving, not living. It has been a day-to-day proposition about what new drama I would have to face.*

*The retreat has allowed me the time away from these constant demands, to think more about myself, my own health and how I can develop better strategies to cope. The session from Carers Vic, 'Relax and Unwind', was a great start to the retreat, not only with the relaxation techniques, but more importantly for me that I must put myself on a higher priority than I am currently doing. I must create personal space for myself, especially for relaxation...*

*...One of the most valuable aspects of the retreat has been meeting with other carers and realising that other people truly understand what you are going through. The chance to discuss with them different coping mechanisms has been invaluable...*



*Marilyn Wilson - Working Carer*

# Mental Health Week

Sunday 5 October – Saturday 11 October



For Mental Health Week, the ABC is launching Mental As: a week of distinctive programming across the ABC.

Check out the website [www.abc.net.au/mentalas](http://www.abc.net.au/mentalas)

Locally we are joining the 8th Annual Celebrate Mental Health Walk on Wednesday 8 October. Meet at Sir William Fry Reserve, Cnr Nepean Highway and Bay Road, Highett (near Southland Shopping Centre). Event runs 10.00am–12.00pm. Former AFL footballer Wayne Schwass will be speaking and there is a free sausage sizzle and activities.

For more information contact Bayside City Council on 9599 444 or Kingston City Council 1300 653 356.

MIF is organising an Art Exhibition where participants can display their artwork at the Frankston Art Centre from 1–11 October (opening ceremony 2 October).

Contact Kylie on 9784 6800 for more details.

On Friday 17 October, come along to our Dinner Dance to be held from 6.00pm–11.00pm at the Peninsula Community Theatre, corner Nepean Highway and Wilsons Road, Mornington. There is a spit roast dinner and carers, clients, family and friends are all welcome!

For more information and to book, contact Alfred Health Carer Services on 8781 3400 by 10 October.

MIF Family Services is also organising a day trip to the Peninsula Hot Springs on 22 October for carers who support people with a mental illness and live in the Southern region. Transport and all costs, including pampering packages are included.

Contact Fiorella or Jacinta on 9784 6800 for more details and to book.

For more on Mental Health Week see [www.mentalhealthvic.org.au](http://www.mentalhealthvic.org.au)

## COME TOGETHER

The **Kingston Movie Club** is run by the Flexible Respite Program and meets monthly on the last Tuesday of the month. It is for carers of an older person who is frail or who has dementia. These events aim to give carers and the person they care for the opportunity to spend an evening together with other people.

The movie is accompanied by a supper of fresh sandwiches, hot savouries, and dessert and fruit platters.

**Location:** 1st floor, Kingston Arts Centre, On the corner of Nepean Highway and South Road, Moorabbin.

**Time:** 4.00pm–7.00pm.

**Access:** There is disabled access throughout the Arts Centre and free parking available on site.

**Cost:** \$15 per couple or \$20 for a group of three.

RSVP essential for catering purposes.

Please contact Kaylyn Armstrong on 9212 3000.

Coming up:

September 30 – 'Give a Girl a Break' with Debbie Reynolds

October 28 – 'The Phantom Stockman' with Kim Marsden

November 25 – 'Monkey Business' with Cary Grant and Ginger Rogers.



# 2014 Carers Week

Take time to take a break

• take a break • meet other carers • enjoy • be inspired • share

Featuring special guest

**Dr Jonathon Welch**

Founding Artistic Director of  
the School of Hard Knocks

## Celebrate Carers Week 12-18 October, 2014

Come and join us for a celebratory get together during Carers Week.

Carers Week events are a great opportunity for you to relax, share information and meet with other carers over a cuppa and light lunch.

If you know another carer in your area who could do with a break, invite them to RSVP too!

The event is FREE for family carers. Register your attendance today **as places are limited**. (This event is not suitable for children or for professional care personnel).

### SPRINGVALE

**Wednesday 15 October, 2014.**

Springvale City Hall,  
397 Springvale Road, Springvale.

Doors open 10.30am.

Event runs from 11.00am to 1.30pm  
Lunch is included.

*Note free coach transport can be booked with pick-ups  
in Pakenham and Dandenong and return.*

### MOORABBIN

**Thursday 16 October, 2014.**

Hemisphere Conference Centre,  
488 South Road, Moorabbin.

Doors open 11.30am.

Event runs from 12.00pm to 2.30pm  
Lunch is included.

*Note free coach transport can be booked with pick-ups  
in Mornington and Frankston and return.*

### RESERVE YOUR PLACE!

Online bookings preferred please  
at [www.carersouth.org.au](http://www.carersouth.org.au) or phone  
for Springvale 9212 3000 **OR**  
Moorabbin 8781 3400.

**RSVP for one event only**  
by Wednesday 1 October, 2014.



Join our Newsletter mailing list by sending this back to the address below or email [j.sweeney@alfred.org.au](mailto:j.sweeney@alfred.org.au) with your request and address details. This will add you to our carer mailing list. If you represent an agency or community group, please telephone 9076 6439 to request copies.

Your name:

ph:

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If undeliverable, return to:

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