

The Bugle

UnitingCare Community Options

If you would like to contribute to The Bugle, please email info@ucco.org.au or ring (03) 9239 2500. We welcome any ideas or suggestions you may have.



Interim CE, Andrew Johnston (left) with the Federal Member for Holt, Anthony Byrne.

Mental health respite win

UNITINGCARE Community Options (UCCO) has secured new funding to deliver mental health respite care in Melbourne's south.

Announced by Federal Member for Holt, Anthony Byrne MP, the \$1.2 million funding grant paves the way for the provision of services under the Targeted Community Care (Mental Health) Program – Mental Health Respite: Carer Support.

UCCO will partner with UnitingCare Connections to support people with mental illness in the local communities of Greater Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia until 30 June, 2016. The service will commence later in 2013 and will be based out of UnitingCare Connections' Narre Warren office.

On being notified of the funding, UCCO Board Chair, Michael Lanyon said, "Congratulations to everyone involved

in this project...it's a real shot in the arm for these communities and recognises the important work that UCCO is doing."

The funding paves the way for UCCO and Connections to meet with local care providers to develop a comprehensive, flexible and care-centred plan that supports their individual circumstances at different points in time.

UCCO's interim Chief Executive, Andrew Johnston, recently visited the Connections office with Anthony Byrne and said the funding was great news for people living in Melbourne's southern suburbs.

"We have a strong track record in successfully supporting those who provide care to people with a mental illness and we are delighted that we now have the opportunity to partner with our colleagues at UnitingCare Connections to deliver our expertise in this space to a whole new audience," he said.

Anthony Byrne said the new services would give families of people with a mental illness in Holt greater access to flexible respite and support services.

"This new service will allow carers to take short breaks from their caring roles, participate in community and social activities, engage in peer support groups and education, or receive counselling and advice, all contributing to their own health and wellbeing."

To find out more about our mental health support services, visit www.ucco.org.au or call us on 1800 052 222.

www.ucco.org.au

'A Good Life For All'



A message from the Chief Executive's desk

IT'S been three months since the UCCO Board asked me to step in as interim Chief Executive and so far it has been both a hectic and rewarding experience.

I was honoured to be asked to 'keep the seat warm' after Scott Sheppard's departure and have been delighted at the way in which our people have banded together throughout the transition period to ensure we have remained on track to deliver all of the strategic outcomes that were set out by the Board.

The process of recruiting a permanent Chief Executive is well underway and the selection panel – headed up by Board Chair, Michael Lanyon – has given every indication that the calibre of applicants was outstanding, so we are all confident that whoever takes on the role will be a tremendous asset to our organisation.

As I write this, final interviews are taking place and we hope to have something to announce soon so please keep any eye on our website or subscribe to our e-news bulletin to find out more.

On another note, we were all delighted last month to finally see the Federal Government pass legislation to establish a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

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It's been a long time coming but the door is now well and truly open for people with disabilities and those who care for them, to receive the level of support they truly need to live meaningful lives.

While there is still much to be done, I think it is timely for us to reflect on the road we have taken to get to this point.

More than 150,000 Australians registered their support for the Every Australian Counts campaign's fight for the introduction of a NDIS, many of which were UCCO participants and staff.

It was a long time coming but, as we draw nearer to the launch of the trial sites, I think we can all be proud to have played a part in successfully lobbying for such a ground breaking social reform.

Enjoy the read!

Andrew Johnston

Interim Chief Executive

Welcome to DisabilityCare



WITH legislation having passed through Federal Parliament and funding allocated in the May budget, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is almost a reality.

UCCO has been one of thousands of like-minded organisations and individuals around the country who have spent the past 2-3 years campaigning for the introduction of the NDIS (now known as DisabilityCare Australia) in an effort to ensure better support for people with disabilities in a person-directed and respectful way.

What has changed?

In May, the Federal Government passed legislation through Parliament to increase the Medicare levy from 1.5 to 2 per cent of taxable income from 1 July 2014 to help fund DisabilityCare Australia.

In addition, the government announced it would invest \$14.3 billion over seven years to roll out DisabilityCare Australia which, along with the funding arrangement it has with the state governments (except WA at this stage) means around 90 per cent of Australians will be covered by DisabilityCare Australia by July 2019.

The first stage of the implementation kicks off this month via launch sites in South Australia, Tasmania, the ACT, the Hunter in NSW and the Barwon area of Victoria

(the official HQ of DisabilityCare Australia) providing care and support for thousands of people with significant and permanent disabilities.

What next?

While we've come a long way, there is still a lot of detail to be worked out and continued campaigning/lobbying will be crucial to ensure the final system truly meets the needs of every individual, no matter how they acquired their disability, or what form it might take.

UCCO believes the system should be regarded and framed as a basic entitlement for all and be multi-faceted so as to include whole of life planning, a support service cycle which can be intensive or occasionally episodic and provide a strong case management service model.

It should also provide broader services such as home modifications and other services/products that are important to a person's wellbeing but are not traditionally associated with disability support.

UCCO would also like to see the new system provide greater flexibility in the provision of supports, allowing the individual and their family to direct the creation of services to suit their needs, rather than meeting the bureaucratic needs of service providers or funding bodies.

UCCO and the wider UnitingCare network will continue to campaign for these provisions to be included as the final details are worked out.

For more information on the introduction of the NDIS, visit www.ndis.gov.au or, to stay up-to-date on the latest news on the NDIS campaign, visit www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au.

UNITINGCARE COMMUNITY



More funding success

UCCO will play a major role in bringing carer respite to Melbourne's north after successfully tendering for further National Respite for Carers Program (NRCP) funding.

The funding agreement is worth more than \$300,000 and will allow us to support up to 51 people in the Northern Metropolitan region. Specifically, we will provide medium-term respite for carers in Melbourne's northern suburbs, with referrals to come the region's from local Councils.

In addition, we will be operating two community based programs targeting:

- Members of the 'stolen generation'
- People of Eastern European descent

With no NRCP programs operating in the Whittlesea region and just one in the Nillumbik area, this success is great news for vulnerable people in Melbourne's north. The funding application was a joint initiative with UnitingCare Kildonan and will operate from their Epping office.

New fee structure

Following a recent review of our fees policy, we will be introducing a new fee structure on 1 July.

It's been three years since we last altered our fees, during which time the cost of providing our various services has continued to rise.

Fees are an important part of the service we provide as they help cover some of the gap between the actual cost of the service and the financial contributions made by the relevant government departments. That's why the Government requires everyone to make a financial contribution to the cost of their own care wherever possible.

As always, we are conscious that everyone has their own particular financial circumstances. Our fees will continue to be well below the average service charge and we will continue to be flexible in the way fees are applied in accordance with each individual circumstance.

If you have any questions please talk to your Partnership Worker, we will be in contact with you during the course of the year to review your circumstances and determine an appropriate fee.

Open for business

An innovative new accommodation facility exclusively for disadvantaged individuals or families has officially opened in Melbourne's outer east.

Gifford Village is a contemporary, person-centred and community-connected housing option based in Croydon North which was developed as a means of providing housing support for individuals or

OPTIONS NEWS AND VIEWS

families, people with a disability and their carers/parents who are eligible for social housing subsidies.

It was developed out of a partnership between Croydon North Uniting Church congregation, UnitingCare Harrison, UnitingCare Community Options and the State and Federal Governments.

The village empowers its residents to live independently by facilitating a healthy and connected community of people who are encouraged to support and engage with each other and participate in the local neighbourhood.

Five of 18 units have been specifically set aside for people with a disability and eligible UCCO participants are now encouraged to consider getting involved.

If you or someone you know could benefit from being involved in a facility like this, please talk to your Partnership Worker as soon as possible or, for more information, please visit:

www.unitingcareharrison.org.au



Inside one of the new Gifford Village apartments.

Picture my future

UCCO has joined with Deakin University to develop a series of training modules and toolkits that better equip people with a disability to plan their own future.

The Picture My Future resource provides a range of supports that encourage people to talk to a planner and take on a more meaningful involvement in identifying the things that are important to them.

The project was supported by Northern Support Services, Able Australia and Inclusion Melbourne and was funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Find out more at:

www.picturemyfuture.com

Follow us

Did you know UCCO is now on Twitter?

Whether you are a social media guru or just like staying up-to-date, our Twitter account (@uccovic) is a great way to stay in the know about what's going on in our sector as it happens.

If too much UCCO news is never enough for you, why not subscribe to our e-news? The UCCO e-news is packed full of useful information and latest happenings from within our organisation and is emailed directly to your inbox every two months (in between editions of The Bugle).

To subscribe, simply visit our website (www.ucco.org.au) then click on the 'News' tab and fill in your details.

NEW WEBSITE HELPS KEEP



A new website designed to prevent neglect and abuse of children with disabilities has been developed by UCCO and Deakin University.

Funded by the State Trustees Australia Foundation - Donald Mann Bequest, the Centre for Evidence-Based Safeguarding of Children with Disability (CESOC) site is particularly aimed at policy makers and professionals who have direct contact with 'at risk' children.

The site has been set up to generate and promote evidence-based solutions which address the needs of children with disability and their caregivers. Specifically, it highlights:

- The prevalence of abuse and neglect for children with disabilities aged 0-9, as well as children with speech and/or language impairments (who may share some of the communication issues experienced by children with disability in the younger age group)
- Individual, social and environmental factors that may expose children with disabilities to greater risk of experiencing maltreatment
- Innovative interventions aimed at safeguarding children with disabilities

from neglect and abuse, as well as supporting children with disabilities who have experienced neglect and abuse, both in Australia and internationally

While it's still early days, Senior Research Fellow at Deakin University and UCCO, Goetz Ottmann, believes the site has the potential to become an important resource for child welfare and child protection services.

"There is still a lot of research to be done in this space but in the long term, we hope this site will contribute to the development of a larger evidence-based 'best practice' approach that will better inform the professional practice of family and disability service providers."

The site is the result of 12 months of research and currently holds a searchable database summarising key research findings which highlight that:

- Children with disabilities are between 1.7 times and 3.4 times more likely to be neglected or abused than children without disabilities
- Children with disabilities aged between 0 and 9 years (particularly those attending primary school), and those with communication impairments, were at greater risk of neglect and abuse

That early intervention programs and support services for families that have a good working knowledge of disability AND child protection issues are critical to the safeguarding of children with disabilities.

- Children with behavioural and speech/language disorders were particularly at risk
- Most maltreated children with disabilities experienced multiple forms of maltreatment

VULNERABLE KIDS SAFE

- Children with different types of disability experienced different rates of abuse across different categories of maltreatment (e.g. sexual, physical and emotional abuse/neglect) and that grouping all types of disability together didn't paint an accurate picture

The site also contains links to useful information for practitioners and managers, such as teaching resources that outline different ways to work with children and

adults who have experienced traumatic events.

The information is continually being updated and by early 2014 will contain details about evidence-informed best practice interventions focusing on safeguarding children from abuse and neglect within the context of services provided by disability service providers.

To find out more, visit www.cesoc.asn.au.

PARTICIPANT COMMITTEE

If you are an UCCO participant and want the opportunity to provide valuable feedback on how UCCO operates, then we want hear from you.

The UCCO Participant Committee is now seeking new members to help further the important work it does in ensuring the organisation's services truly cater to the needs of all participants, or their carers and advocates.

The Committee comprises volunteers from UCCO's participant group and, since 2003, has helped the organisation continuously improve the way it operates, while also acting as a forum for members to meet with others and discuss common concerns.

Recent activities

Committee meetings – the Participant Committee is represented at several UCCO panel sessions to ensure participant views are considered as part of the organisation's decision making process. In recent months, committee members have attended meetings of the P&Q Sub-Committee and Access & Equity Committee, as well as a Service Provider Review meeting held by the Quality Team.

Briefings – The committee is regularly briefed on major developments from outside the organisation to ensure members are well informed about relevant policy developments such as the introduction of a National Disability Insurance Scheme and the pending Aged Care reforms. The Committee also has an opportunity to present their own views which help shape UCCO's advocacy program.

UCCO updates – the Committee is also kept up-to-date on major initiatives and developments within the organisation. Most recently this included a briefing on the Victorian Human Rights Charter and what it means for participants, UCCO's Strategic Plan Review/Update and the successful tender bid to provide mental health respite in Melbourne's south.

How to get involved

The Participant Committee places great importance on values like inclusion, consultation, empowerment and collaboration so, if you can spare a couple of hours every month to contribute, then please contact Liz Wray on 9239 2500 or liz.wray@ucco.org.au

DISCOVERING THE VALUE



Stuart with Program Manager, Carer Support Programs, Aimi Johnson.

HAVING served in the Australian SAS for four years, Stuart Weston was no stranger to encountering and overcoming obstacles. But when some major obstacles appeared in his family life, Stuart suddenly found himself struggling to cope. This is his story.....

Stuart is a dedicated father of five and a full time carer for his family. His wife (Ann) has a personality disorder and he has a daughter with down syndrome, a son with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and a daughter with possible bi-polar disorder.

The family was further rocked when Stuart suffered a heart attack and the challenge of taking care of his family became even greater.

Stuart and his family first came into contact with UCCO's Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre (CRCC) via its involvement in the Paying Attention To Self (PATS) program – an eight week support program based around education for children who have a parent with a mental illness. After some initial consultation, three children were supported by CRCC's Young Carers team to balance caring and school responsibilities.

The Young Carer's program provides primary and secondary school students who have a significant caring role with a range of activities that provide some time away from their normal responsibilities and a chance to interact with other people their own age.

"The Young Carers were amazing. They took the kids on a trip to Queensland and gave them some memorable experiences we could never give them.....it is really humbling to know there are people out there who are willing to help us out like this," said Stuart.

Through the valuable support the kids were receiving, Stuart and Ann soon discovered there were also respite options available to them which Stuart was initially reluctant to explore.

"In hindsight I guess I had that classic 'I'm fine – I don't need help.....' male attitude, but it got to the stage where I was getting a bit depressed and my health was suffering," said Stuart.

"When our youngest started getting crook it was almost the last straw – we were definitely struggling and Anne and I were arguing a lot."

He said it was Ann who initiated the respite support in an effort to encourage him to take better care of himself.

"She realised that I had an important job to do and that if I didn't start taking better care of myself then I would be letting everyone down.....we both soon realised how important respite was and that I didn't have to do everything on my own," he said.

With CRCC support, Stuart was soon able to take some much needed time out to attend a 'men's retreat' where he could rest, recover and share experiences

OF RESPITE: STUART'S STORY

with other men in similar situations. In time, Stuart was connected to other care-focused events and, importantly, was successfully referred to several other services that could provide longer-term respite options.

As part of the process, the CRCC team referred him to another service which provided financial assistance for Stuart and his family to rent a house on the coast and deliver their son's 21st birthday dream of spending a week away with his family.

Today Stuart and his family are coping well and he is feeling strong and up for all of the highs and lows that come his way.

"Health-wise I feel so much better. We all

have our bad days from time to time but when you are happy on the inside you are happy on the outside as well.....it makes a big difference," he said.

"My advice to anyone in my situation would be to stop being stubborn, swallow your pride and ask for help. Yes it's a leap of faith but you just need to trust in those who are offering you support and just know that this is the best thing you can do for yourself and your family."

To find out more about Young Carers or the many carer support options that may be available to you, visit:

www.ucco.org.au/get-assistance/carers or call 1800 052 222.

ANOTHER WIN FOR UCCO

UCCO will soon be managing a new housing project for older people or people with a disability in Melbourne's east after winning a major state government (Department of Health) tender.

The new three year funding arrangement allows for UCCO to manage a Homeshare program in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Victoria. Homeshare is a unique shared accommodation arrangement that matches older people or people with a disability who are seeking companionship and assistance around the home, with a person looking for cheaper accommodation.

It's a win-win situation, with the older person or person with a disability receiving companionship and in-house support, and the other homesharer receiving free accommodation in exchange for

providing around 10 hours of practical assistance (cooking, cleaning, shopping etc) each week, as well as providing company and security.

As a leader in facilitating consumer-directed care, UCCO has keenly followed the development of the Homeshare concept since its pilot in 2000 and has regularly referred clients to other Homeshare arrangements.

UCCO will manage Homeshare in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Victoria from July until July 2016.

For details, please call 9239 2500.



Be scam aware

WHETHER they are elaborate hoaxes or simple tricks, any one of us can fall victim to a scam when we are not on our guard.

With a new scam seemingly being reported on every day, our Direct2Care team have compiled a useful list of do's and don'ts to help you to remain safe in your home and your community.

SCAMS TARGET EVERYONE – PROTECT YOURSELF

- Don't respond to offers, deals or requests for your details. Stop and take time to check the offer.
- Find solid evidence from independent sources.
- It is safer to type in the address of a website of a bank, business or authority on the internet rather than opening a link
- Always look up phone numbers in an independent directory when checking if a request is genuine.
- Never click on a link provided in an unsolicited email
- Never respond to out of the blue requests for your personal details.
- Never send money or give credit card account or other personal details to anyone who makes unsolicited offers or requests for information.

HANDY HINT: If it sounds too good to be true, it is probably a scam.

DO NOT CALL REGISTER

The Do Not Call Register was set up to address the growth in unsolicited telemarketing calls. You can list your home phone and mobile numbers on this register. Registering your number will not stop all telemarketing calls but will decrease the amount you receive.

DOOR-TO-DOOR SALES - HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

- Ask for identification
- Shop around and know what you want
- Ensure that you obtain written quotes, even for minor jobs
- Don't sign any agreement until you are ready
- Ask for references
- Remember you have a 10 day cooling-off period

TAKE ACTION

- Say NO!
- Take down information such as their name and vehicle registration
- Warn your friends, family and neighbours
- Report them to Consumer Affairs Victoria on 1300 55 81 81

PERSONAL SAFETY

- Be assertive, walk with confidence, be aware of your surroundings
- Keep valuables out of site
- Vary your routine and stick to well-lit areas
- Face oncoming traffic when walking on the footpath
- Carry a mobile phone
- Remain active and involved in your community

For further information, please contact Direct2Care on 1300 121 121 or watch out for more helpful hints in the next edition of The Bugle.



Holiday fun

THE Young Carers were spoilt for choice during the April school holidays with a virtual smorgasbord of activities to get involved in.

The Young Carers program is run by UCCO's Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre. The Program supports young people aged 25 years and under who provide care for a family member or friend who has a disability, chronic illness, mental illness, alcohol or other substance dependence or is frail aged. It specifically targets those young people who are at primary and secondary school or equivalent.

Through a range of activities, the program seeks to bring young people together in fun settings where they can spend some time away from their normal responsibilities with other people their age. It also brings young people together with similar challenges and responsibilities in their life so they can share their experience. The Young Carer Program is also able to provide carer support and respite as per an individual's needs either on a short-term or emergency basis.

During April, a group of 23 older Young Carers spent a night under the stars sleeping among the animals in the old elephant enclosure at the Melbourne Zoo followed by a behind the scenes tour.

Later, the group had the chance to literally chill out in the Chill On Ice Lounge – a special venue built entirely from ice – before climbing to the top of the Eureka Tower and stepping out on the Skydeck to see the world in a whole new way.

Meanwhile, the primary school aged Young Carers went behind the scenes at the Melbourne Aquarium where they had the rare opportunity to enter the 'quarantine area' to feed a number of stingrays - including one that was two metre long!

offer, including the chance to laze back in oversized bean bags to watch a private screening of Epic at Hoyts Melbourne Central Bean Bag Cinema. Everyone enjoyed the movie, including one Young Carer who took advantage of the comfiness of the bags to catch a few Z's.

The July school holidays are now just around the corner and there is a big program of activities planned, including a visit to Bounce and Hip Hop for secondary school-aged kids, a day at the movies to see Man of Steel (plus a visit to Time Zone), an activity at Sing and Bowl for primary school-aged kids, PLUS an opportunity for secondary school-aged young carers to see PINK in concert!

To find out more about the Young Carers program, call 1800 052 222.



The Bugle

June/July 2013

ABOUT US

UNITINGCARE Community Options is a community services organisation, dedicated to assisting people to live good lives in their own homes and communities. We have been supporting older people, people with disabilities and the unpaid carers that support them since 1987. Each year, we support around 4000 people throughout Melbourne's east and south.

Our vision is to achieve 'a good life for all' regardless of their abilities. We aim to support people in achieving the goals they have and living the life they hope for. If you know anyone who might benefit from our support, please ask them to contact us.

FEEDBACK

We're always looking for ways to improve our service so please let us know if you have any feedback you'd like to share with us. If you have an issue or complaint, please raise the matter with your Partnership Worker who will raise the complaint with their Manager if they are unable to help. Issues that remain unresolved will be dealt with by Senior Management. You can also ask for support from an external advocate. See your Participant Information Pack for more information.

CONTACTING US

Direct2Care

Freecall: 1300 121 121

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre

Disability: 1800 052 222

Ageing: 1800 059 059

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Interpreters Available On Request

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ΚΑΤΟΠΙΝ ΖΗΤΗΣΗΣ

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For assistance, please call the Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450.