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March 2016

Even though I feel as though Christmas was only a few days ago, our April meeting – a quarter of the way through 2016 - is around the corner and much is already afoot both in our own group and in those around us.

NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME (NDIS)

Despite media scare-mongering recently claiming that the NDIS was to be scrapped, I have seen nothing of substance to support this and accept that the first roll-out of the NDIS to an area within metropolitan Melbourne, is still planned for NE region, commencing July 2016, It's important that you keep informed by looking at the NDIS website for yourself and by asking case managers for updates. <http://www.ndis.gov.au/>

The following may also be useful:

NDIS – Mental Illness Fellowship (MIF) short clips on how to access the NDIS are excellent.

With support from the NDIA, MIF has produced a video resource developed by people with a lived experience of mental illness and their families - short films in which peers offer their tips on how to access and utilise the NDIS. These stories will provide helpful knowledge on accessing and making the most of the NDIS from the perspective of people with a Psycho Social Disability. In the video people offer advice to potential participants of NDIS of what worked and what didn't coming in to the agency and also any suggestions to make it easier for new participants. To watch go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGmizTcNyUfryQNOD4J4Z3XIB-b7ZTsDj>

NDIS – Peer Conversation Project

The Peer Conversation Project supports carers of people eligible for, but not yet enrolled in the NDIS by putting them in touch with trained carers who have already supported the person they care for transition to the NDIS successfully.

A range of resources, including a series of videos, have also been created to help carers understand the NDIS. <http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/ndis-and-carers/>

If you would like to know more, please contact Kylie Preston, NDIS Project Manager, at Carers Australia:

Carers.NDIS@carersaustralia.com.au or 02 6122 9900.

Tuesday 12 April - NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Commissioning Framework Consultations provides opportunities for people with disability, families and carers, as well people who work in the sector, to give feedback on key elements of the *Consultation Draft* and to put forward views on the *ILC Commissioning Framework* and translating the *ILC Policy Framework* into action

10 am to 2 pm - 2 Clarendon St, South Wharf, Melb. - but please check the address when you enrol as the site was inconsistent.

This is YOUR chance to let government hear your views .

<http://www.ndis.gov.au/event/vic>

APRIL MEETING: 7.30 pm Tuesday April 12

Betty Day Centre- 67 Argyle St, St Kilda

SPEAKER: JOHN WATKINS

a mental health counsellor, educator & researcher with four decades of experience. His books include 'Shrinking Psychosis', 'Living with Schizophrenia', 'Hearing Voices: A Common Human Experience', 'Healing Schizophrenia, Using medication wisely'.

The book he is currently writing ' The Soul's perilous Journey has taken him on a fascinating journey, some of which he will share with us.

What food additive kills SIX TIMES as many individuals as the road toll?

...if you haven't read this and learned the answer, you have missed out on many more useful items by failing to subscribe to our emails.

...and you've missed a wealth of information, cost us money and resources that could be used much better than on killing trees for paper and wasting time folding letters which may – or may not, depending on the vagaries of Australia Post – arrive on time

Please let us know if we can email rather snail mail Newsletters to you and how you feel about our regular emails.

DINING GROUP 6.30 pm THURSDAY APRIL 21

Pho55 55 Glenferrie Road, Malvern

Near Dandenong Rd, trams, Malvern station & parking

Bookings essential by Monday April 18

Ph: 9076 4713 Leave message if no-one answers.

Dining Group always meets in modestly priced venues, with meal account shared, but drinks to be paid individually <http://www.pho55.com.au/>

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE INTERESTING

I think undoubtedly one of the best news items I've read is the win by Ella Ingram, a 21-year-old student, against an insurance company. Ella has been selected by the BBC to be one of 2015's most influential women – a huge honour for anyone, and especially for a 21 year old Aussie. The spill-over from her bravery and persistence, aided by Legal Aid is likely to benefit us all.

Landmark win for former schoolgirl who stared down the insurance giant December 2015

Ella Ingram refused to accept insurance giant QBE's decision to deny her travel insurance claim and has won a landmark victory against discrimination in the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal which found that QBE discriminated against her when it issued her with a travel insurance policy that excluded any coverage for people with mental health conditions and that it further discriminated when it refused her claim for \$4292.48.

'The practice of excluding people with mental health conditions from accessing travel, income protection and life insurance policies reinforces stigma and discourages people from seeking support when they need it most,' **beyondblue** CEO Georgie Harman said today.

With the right support and treatment, most people recover from conditions like depression and anxiety.

In our experience, insurance policies make no distinction between different kinds of mental health conditions and often refuse to insure anyone with a history of mental illness, even when they are fully recovered. "We call on the insurance industry to embrace 21st century expectations and change policies and practices that discriminate against people with a past or present mental health conditions," Ms Harman said.

We are seeking a champion of the insurance industry to step forward and work with us to design a fair and equitable policy that treats people as individuals.

Ms Harman along with Mental Health Australia CEO Frank Quinlan, called on insurers to use contemporary evidence and data, and take individual circumstances into account instead of making broad assumptions about a person's mental health and ability to function. Insurance companies seem to think that there are two kinds of people in the world, and if you have a history of mental illness then the insurance market, which many of us take for granted, is not for you.

We hope the outcome of this case will be a catalyst for change in the insurance sector.

Regardless, every Australian living with a mental illness, and those who care for them, owe a great debt to Ella for the courage she has shown in taking on the insurance industry. **Beyondblue** calls on people to share their stories of insurance discrimination at www.beyondblue.org.au/insurance.

Mental health professionals are available at the **beyondblue** Support Service via phone 24/7 on 1300 22 4636 or www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support for online chat (3pm-midnight AEST)

THE (VERY) BAD

COPMI national initiative funding discontinued

Emerging Minds, the parent body of Children of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPMI) has been advised by Australian Government that the national initiative will no longer receive funding after June 30, 2016.

The COPMI national initiative has received 15 years of sequential funding that has produced highly regarded, evidence based, co-produced resources and best-practice guidance in addressing the previously hidden needs of children and families where a parent experiences mental illness. Our international reach has supported increased understanding of research, practice and policy responses in relation to the needs of this group.

MORE GOOD

Obtained via: : info@vmiac.org.au www.vmiac.org.au

Circle of Support – free training

Caulfield Pavilion Thursday April 7 -5.30-7.30 pm

<http://us4.campaign-archive1.com/?u=4bb811882ec60b30aaa250f1&id=999c7bccf7&e=6ee55b8c81>

This three-part series has been designed to provide support to family carers, advocates and friends of a person with a disability who would like to explore the possibility of starting a Circle of Support. The workshops run over a year and cover the principles, techniques and strategies required to build a successful Circle of Support.

MIND AUSTRALIA

As usual, MIND has started and planned a bumper year.

With trainers who generally have lived experience of mental health, an amazing course guide can be found at:

https://www.mindaustralia.org.au/assets/docs/Resources/J21403_MRC_Course_Guide_Terms12_2106_lores.pdf

At the Mind Recovery College you get to be a student, learning real-life skills for a better life, generally from individuals who have lived experience and understand you. Upcoming courses include:

- What is recovery?
- Navigating the mental health system
- Motivation and mental health
- Helping others help you
- Health and wellbeing through creativity
- Understanding Advance Statements
- **Workshops for carers: Building carer resilience, Recovery and hope**

BRAINWAVES TO BE HEARD ON 3 CR

MI Fellowship funds and coordinates a weekly community radio program which is produced and presented by people with lived experience of mental illness.

Brainwaves airs on 3CR Community Radio each Wednesday from 5pm to 5.30pm. The program features topical information about mental health issues, interesting guests, heart-warming stories and some laughs as well.

The Brainwaves concept was developed by MI Fellowship. The aim was to create an innovative, totally peer-run activity that could offer skills development, community connection and an avenue for exploring mental illness and recovery through people's lived experiences. Community radio was identified as being able to address these criteria, and at the same time raise public awareness of mental illness. And so a partnership between MI Fellowship and 3CR was established.

Today the show enjoys a high profile within the mental health sector, as a unique voice for people experiencing mental health issues.

The program was awarded the Excellence in Training Award by the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia in 2012. The Brainwaves team also won the Community Engagement award in the 2014 3CR Radio Awards.

Information on volunteering for Brainwaves:

<http://www.mifellowship.org/content/volunteering-brainwaves-information-volunteers>

One in five people have a mental illness ... but five in five can enjoy this great program.

[Download Brainwaves podcasts from the 3CR website](#)

<http://www.3cr.org.au/brainwaves>

MENTAL HEALTH AUSTRALIA CARERS FORUMS

The Carers Forum is an Australian service for families, friends and other carers of someone living with mental illness. It provides a safe, anonymous online space for us to share our stories and help each other

<http://mhaustralia.saneforums.org/t5/Carers-Forum/ct-p/carers-forum>

PREVENTION – an App for teens dubbed Goalzie

A new free app has been developed to promote the idea that getting help from peers, developing a positive social network and setting and achieving goals is not only healthy, but fun.

The app targets young people aged 12 to 17 years old, and reinvents the old-school 'Truth or Dare' game for the next generation, all to help maintain their wellbeing. <http://www.youngandwellcrc.org.au/new-app-makes-seeking-help-a-goal-for-teens/#sthash.heC2eWh6.dpuf>

PRIME MINISTER LAUNCHES ASK IZZY

https://www.infoxchange.net.au/news/prime-minister-launches-ask-izzy?utm_source=Infocast&utm_campaign=de3c447aef-Infocast_for_January_2016&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5c9798fcd8-de3c447aef-45631665

Ask Izzy is a free and anonymous online directory that helps Australians who are homeless find critical support services. The mobile site was co-designed with people who have experienced homelessness and leaders in the homelessness sector to make sure it responded to their needs.

"The knowledge I picked up in playing around with Ask Izzy for an hour probably took me about two to three years on the street to pick up," Danny, from the Council to Homeless Persons says.

Infocast CEO David Spriggs says mobile phones can be a lifeline for people experiencing homelessness.

"Almost 80 percent of people experiencing homelessness own a smartphone, but finding services can be difficult because information can be outdated, waiting lists long and service criteria complex," Mr Spriggs says.

"Ask Izzy is an easy-to-use tool developed in close collaboration with people who have experienced homelessness and leaders in the homelessness sector, to make sure it responds to their needs."

MAY MEETING – -7.30 pm Tuesday May 10

Betty Day Centre- 67 Argyle St, St Kildal

SPEAKER: FELICITY ('FLICK') GRAY

An inspiring young lady with a consumer and research background, Flick is a testament to the success of psychosocial avenues, the Hearing Voices movement and Open Dialogue (OD). She is a peer worker trained in OD and trains others in Intentional Peer Support, an aspect of Parachute NYC which is a pilot project developed to transform New York City crisis mental health services by providing integrated crisis intervention (<http://recovery.rfmh.org/index.php?id=347>).

Flick is the current recipient of The (Barbara) Hocking Fellowship, awarded by SANE. She is off to London shortly to expand on knowledge regarding OD. In July-August the fellowship will enable her to study OD in Finland (where it was first introduced formally) and in UK, USA and Germany where OD is being used

Some more interesting and useful workshops:

CARERS VIC

Top four Carer Education Workshops

<http://www.carersvictoria.org.au/how-we-help/education/carers-education>

Caring for yourself

Is finding time for yourself difficult? This workshop discusses the benefits, barriers and strategies to help you care for yourself.

Surviving carer stress

It's common for carers to feel stressed at times. Come and learn how stress affects us and some ways of managing it.

Relax and unwind

Have you forgotten how to relax? Do you want to try out some simple, enjoyable techniques to unwind and recharge that are easy to fit into a busy life?

Carers get angry too!

You're not alone if you get angry from time to time. But anger can be useful too! Why not explore what's behind the anger, and use it to make positive changes.

<http://www.carersvictoria.org.au/how-we-help/education/elearning/>

Of all the calls for help I receive, difficulties with communicating with professionals is the leader.

Among their many excellent topics, CarersVic are offering eLearning titled: – Communicating with Professionals

I look forward to meeting you on April 12, April 21 and May 10, if not before

Warm Regards, Judi Burstyner

BOUVERIE - HELP FOR FAMILIES

<http://www.bouverie.org.au/>

Bouverie is a state-wide provider of family-based therapy, funded to see a range of different families, especially those experiencing mental health issues, alcohol and other drug related problems, acquired brain injury (ABI) and/or complex and traumatic circumstances.

TWO DAY WORKSHOP

Carer families living or supporting someone with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)

This workshop series invites participants to share and respond to stories of living with BPD and the effects it has on lives and relationships. Participants are also encouraged to explore and evaluate knowledge and practices that foster realistic ways to promote, inform and support relationships and initiatives that work with the effects of BPD on families.

Friday 15th and Saturday 16th April 2016 – no charge

Venue - The Bouverie Centre, 8 Gardiner St, Brunswick.

The group is facilitated by Peter McKenzie (PhD, MA ClinFamTher). Peter is the Carer Academic and a Family Therapist at The Bouverie Centre. He has been working in the area of families and BPD for a number of years, both clinically and as a trainer and advocate.

TO REGISTER Contact Peter on (03) 9385 5100

**VICSERV: MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE:
TOWARDS RECOVERY**

19-20 May 2016

<http://conference.vicserv.org.au>

<http://conference.vicserv.org.au/program/program>

There is a vastly reduced, subsidized charge available for Consumers and Carers, but you must apply asap as places at the reduced fee of \$90 for one day and \$160 for both days, are limited.

Though the programme is yet to be finalized, the organizing committee has some wonderful individuals on it and the speakers on the programme as it currently stands, indicate that the conference is likely to be very useful.