



# Network Bulletin

## 14 December 2020

Welcome to our last fortnightly bulletin for 2020.

If you are unable to open any links or attachments, please contact the Network on 6230 5796 or email [actmhcnc@actmhcnc.org.au](mailto:actmhcnc@actmhcnc.org.au).

Of particular note in this bulletin, the Network would like to draw your attention to the following:

- End of Year celebration postponement and office closure
- Bursary applications for TheMHS closing this week;
- Applications open for the 2021 ACT Mental Health Consumer Scholarship Scheme; and
- Notice on fee changes to Health Records (Privacy and Access)

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## 1. Network update

### 1.1 Office closure

From 12noon on Tuesday 22 December 2020, the Network office will be closed and officially reopen on Monday 1 February 2021

### 1.2 Online Drop-In

Our online Drop-In is now closed for 2020 and will reopen in February 2021.

Allie, our Drop-In Coordinator, is seeking some ideas from members about what type of activities members would be interested in attending Drop-In for.

If you have any ideas, please forward them to Allie by email to [dropin@actmhc.org.au](mailto:dropin@actmhc.org.au)

### 1.3 Network End of Year celebration

Usually at this point in the year, we would have held our end of year celebration.

Unfortunately for 2020, we have made decision to not go ahead with an end of year celebration, but instead will hold an event for our members sometime in late February 2021.

With the weather being highly unpredictable this year, there is no certainty about being able to hold an outdoor event and COVID-19 restrictions would mean that we would have been limited in the number of attendees for an indoor event. We anticipate that by February, the weather would be more predictable and can safely hold an outdoor event.

Please keep your eyes open for the Autumn 2021 newsletter, expected to be distributed in early February 2021, for further details.

## 2. For Your Information

### 2.1 ACT Mental Health Consumer Scholarship Scheme

The ACT Mental Health Consumer Scholarship Scheme is a partnership between ACT Health, CIT and ACT Mental Health Consumer Network. It is designed to support mental health consumers to study in the community services area. The aim of the scheme is to

increase employment opportunities for mental health consumers in mental health, alcohol and other drugs, community development, youth work and community services.

Anyone who has lived experience of a mental illness/disorder and is 17 years of age or older is eligible to apply for admission to the scholarship scheme. Preference will be given to applicants who have not completed post-secondary studies and/or are unemployed.

The ACT Mental Health Consumer Scholarship Scheme is a two staged approach to support mental health consumers gain qualifications in the area of human services.

- The first stage of the scheme is funding for the completion of the Statement of Attainment in Introductory Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs. This qualification will work towards a Certificate IV within the community services package.

- The second stage is funding that covers course fees only for study in one of the Certificate IV courses in the Community Work Programs.

These are run by the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) at CIT Bruce.

Approximately 25 scholarships are available. The scholarship is valid for two years.

This scholarship scheme is available to Australian residents and citizens. Please note international students are not eligible.

To be eligible for consideration, you must complete the Scholarship Application Form (attached) in full and send to the Canberra Institute of Technology. Applications will be considered and assessed by a selection committee. Interviews may also be conducted. The decision by the selection committee is final and appeals will not be accepted.

**Round 1 applications have now closed. Round 2 applications are due by 22 January 2021.**

All applicants will be notified about the outcome of their application in writing within two weeks of the selection committee meetings.

## **2.2 Bursary Applications Now Open for TheMHS Perth Virtual Conference**

We're now taking applications for bursaries to TheMHS Perth Virtual Conference – February 2021.

TheMHS values the voice of people living with mental illness, and as such, offers bursaries to support you in attending the annual TheMHS Conference. Made possible by support from the Commonwealth Government, this year we are offering more than double our usual number of bursaries!

The upcoming virtual conference in February is a fantastic opportunity to join the mental health community as we come together online to share our learnings, our insights, and our innovations across the mental health sector. Just like a face to face event, you will have opportunities to build connections with others, learn what the community is doing to bring balance to the system, and have live interactions with exhibitors, speakers, e-posters, and fellow delegates!

TheMHS is also pleased to announce that the National Mental Health Consumer Alliance (NMHCA), a newly formed and unified National consumer voice, will play a strong role in the selection of the Perth Virtual Conference bursaries.

Opportunities for bursaries are open to consumers and people living with mental ill-health. The process is simple, just click the button below and fill out the application. You will be contacted in due course by the National Mental Health Consumer Alliance, who will confirm whether your application has been successful.

Applications close at midnight on Friday 18th December.

[Apply Now by clicking on this link](#)

### **2.3 Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner Satisfaction Survey**

The Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner (PACYPC) is committed to pursuing a supportive and caring community where the rights and interests of people experiencing vulnerability are protected.

The PACYPC advocates for individuals and at a systems level to encourage and facilitate positive changes (for example, service improvements) that lead to improved outcomes for people experiencing vulnerability.

If you recently have had contact with staff from the PACYPC, they would greatly appreciate you taking the time to complete the survey below, which consists of four brief rating-style questions followed by an opportunity to provide explanatory comments. It should take less than 5 minutes to complete this survey.

The survey is designed to be anonymous, however if you wish to identify yourself in your comments, please feel free to do so. Responses will be collated however, in accordance with the Information Privacy Act 2014 (ACT), individuals will not be identified. *It will be open for two weeks until 18 December 2020.*

The information that you provide will be used to assess and improve the services offered by the PACYPC, while also enabling us to report on our performance.

Please click on the link to complete the survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3SGSNRR>

### **2.4 Health Records (Privacy and Access) (Fees) Determination**

For your information and appropriate action, the ACT Health Directorate has increased a range of fees within the fee schedule under the Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997.

The Determination has been signed by the Minister and will become effective on 1 January 2021.

For a complete listing of the ACT Health Directorate's fee schedule in relation to this Act, please visit the ACT Legislation web site and refer to Disallowable Instrument DI2020-300 (link below).

<https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/di/2020-300/>

## 2.5 Clemente Summer Community Art Program

“PRINTMAKING AND PORTRAITS”

Enrolments are now open to join artist Nicola Lambert for three fun and creative art classes in a supportive environment.

Classes will run 10.00am to 12.00pm at the ACU Campus in Watson on Friday February 5, Friday February 12, and Friday February 19. They are run by St Vincent de Paul Society with the support of the University.

Nicola was formally trained as a Printmaker in Limerick School of Art and Design. She has been involved in the Arts sector over the past 7 years in various roles, in both Ireland and Australia.

Classes and materials are free and all levels of experience are welcome. Lunch is also provided. Please do note classes are for adults – participants must be 18 years or older.

Please email Sam or Bec at [Clemente.cg@vinnies.org.au](mailto:Clemente.cg@vinnies.org.au) for more information on either class or call on 0418 714 835.

## 2.6 Trauma Awareness and Understanding Course

Last week the ACT Recovery College delivered the first 'Trauma Awareness and Understanding' full day course at the new University of Canberra Hospital in Bruce which was greatly received by all who took part.

You can read more about this course on the [ACT Recovery College's blog](#).

## 3. Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) information

### 3.1 COVID-19 ACT Website

The ACT Health Directorate has a website specific to COVID-19 in the ACT. This website includes Public Health Alerts, prevention guidelines, information on supports and resources etc. as well as information on the current testing criteria. The website can be accessed at the following link <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au>.

Information about COVID-19 is also available 24 hours a day, seven days a week from the national Coronavirus Health Information Line on **1800 020 080**.

### 3.2 COVID-19 Testing Clinics

Canberra Health Services is operating several free testing clinics to make it easier for Canberrans to be tested.

Additionally the GP Respiratory Clinics in the ACT are located in established general practices dedicated to supporting their communities and increasing access to COVID-19 testing. Appointments are required.

A GP Respiratory Clinic is different to a COVID-19 Testing Clinic in that GPs do a full assessment including taking a history, performing an examination, providing testing and treatment. If symptoms are diagnosed as another illness, such as pneumonia, the GP can provide treatment during the appointment, before returning care to the usual GP.

Information about the testing locations can be found via the [ACT COVID-19 website](#).

### 3.3 Changed visitor arrangements at ACT's health facilities

All ACT health facilities and community health centres will ease their visitor restrictions as from Monday 26 October.

This easing has been made possible due to continued health screening, physical distancing, and hand hygiene measures. These are the frontline of our defence against COVID-19 and will continue across all our health facilities.

The new arrangement allows for two visitors per patient, on site per day.

Women who are admitted for care related to birthing may have up to two support persons present.

Patients attending an outpatient or a community health clinic should attend alone wherever possible. If you need support, please limit this to one other person.

The decision to restrict visitors to the ACT's health facilities is always a difficult one, but it ensures the health and safety of everyone is protected. This is especially necessary for Canberra's most vulnerable, particularly patients whose health is already compromised.

Compassionate exceptions to the visitor policy will continue to be determined on a case by case basis however each case must be in consultation with the relevant clinical staff.

When visiting, please use the hand sanitiser supplied and keep your distance from other people whenever possible.

No children visiting patients in hospital where possible.

Before entering any ACT health facilities and community health centres you must complete the screening tool (or you will be refused entry).

To access the screening tool, simply choose one of the following:

- download the ACT Health App and select 'ACT health facilitates screening tool'
- scan the QR code on the health screening posters as you enter a health facility
- fill in your details online at [screening.covid19.act.gov.au](https://screening.covid19.act.gov.au), or
- fill in a form at the screening desk on site.

Show your completed form to screening staff as you enter any ACT health facility

### 3.4 CARE Financial Inc - Help during COVID 19

Care Inc's services are running at full capacity to ensure everyone has access to the vital support they offer.

- Financial counselling services for people experiencing financial difficulty. Call 1800 007 007 or email [admin@carefcs.org](mailto:admin@carefcs.org)
- The Consumer Law Centre for legal advice around credit and debt, consumer and fair trading, and insurance. Call 02 6143 0044 or email [clc.admin@carefcs.org](mailto:clc.admin@carefcs.org)
- Microfinance - No interest loans programs, including a specific program for people who have experienced and left domestic violence. Call 02 6257 1788 or email [microfinanceteam@carefcs.org](mailto:microfinanceteam@carefcs.org)
- Education - for financial capability webinars or to access the \$100 Energy Support Voucher program call Care's education team on 0490008701 or email [education@carefcs.org](mailto:education@carefcs.org)

For community safety, all services are provided online or via phone to ensure that they can continue to provide their high standard of support while observing social distancing guidelines. Care Inc continues to work closely with ACT Community Legal Centres and social services, and can provide appropriate referrals. Please call Care Inc's admin line on 02 6257 1788 for more information on how they can support the ACT community during COVID-19 or visit [www.carefcs.org](http://www.carefcs.org)

### 3.5 Mental Health and COVID-19 Support Services

The BeyondBlue Coronavirus Mental Health Support Service is now online and offers free information, counselling, community forums and referrals online and by phone. It also provides information on topics ranging from coping and wellbeing advice, to digital self-help tools and advice for people, small business owners etc. who have been impacted by COVID-19.

This service can be [accessed online](#) or by calling 1800 512 348.

Other national mental health services that can also be accessed include the websites of [Head to Health](#) and [Life in Mind](#).

Locally, Woden Community Service (WCS) are still operating their mental health programs via telephone and online methods, and are still accepting referrals.

Information about each program can be found via the [WCS website](#). Below are the contact details for each program.

Transition to Recovery (TRec)

Contact: Jayne Tandl on 0409 706 827 or 6221 9511

The Way Back Support Service

Contact: Prue Gleeson 0437 112 483 or 1800 929 222

#### Early Intervention Programs

New Path: An early intervention service, to assist people to tackle severe mental health challenges with associated functional impairment, targeting 18-35 years and up to 64 years.

For an electronic referral form, see: <https://www.wcs.org.au/services/mental-health/new-path>

Contact: Sophie Mayer: 0409 038 194

Next Step: A free and confidential psychological support service provided to people experiencing depression, anxiety, having difficulty adjusting to changes in life circumstances or experiencing grief and loss. Next Step is delivered by coaches who have been trained to deliver this model of psychological therapy. This model is particularly suited to people adjusting to the isolation associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. GP and self-referrals is encouraged.

Contact: 6287 8066 (business hours)

The impact of COVID-19 on the mental health and wellbeing of Australians has also been increasingly documented with organisations across the board creating new support resources: Mental Health: ACT & SNSW HealthPathways

### 3.6 Canberra COVID Legal Help

Canberra [COVID Legal Help](#) is a new portal from Canberra Community Law, Economic Justice Australia, CARE Financial Counselling and the Consumer Law Centre.

In their latest video Canberra Community Law has teamed up with Gordon Legal for an information session about Robodebt, the Robodebt Class Action, and Centrelink debt in general. This is great information for anyone who is affected by these issues.

Canberra Community Law's Facebook page has a collection of recent Facebook live videos available for free. There is no need to be subscribed to Facebook to be able to access these videos.

<https://www.facebook.com/canberracommunitylaw/live>

### 3.7 COVID-19 support for young carers

## FOR YOUNG CARERS ADDITIONAL COVID-19 SUPPORT



### ARE YOU A YOUNG CARER OR A YOUNG ADULT CARER WHO HAS BEEN IMPACTED BY COVID-19, OR DO YOU KNOW OF ONE?

A Young Carer or Young Adult Carer provides unpaid care to a family member or friend that is living with a disability, a physical or mental illness, chronic health condition or is frail and aged.

If health and wellbeing have been impacted as a result of COVID, Young Carers may be able to access a package to meet additional costs, maintain their wellbeing and support their education.

Carers ACT is able to support Young Carers and Young Adult Carers, up to the age of 30 who have been impacted by COVID.

If you are a sibling to someone living with a disability or health condition, and have provided carer support you wouldn't normally do as a result of COVID 19, you may also be eligible.

Call us to discuss eligibility or to make a referral at 1800 960 990 or email [young.carers@carersact.org.au](mailto:young.carers@carersact.org.au)

**Carers**ACT

YOUNG  
CARERS

For information, advice and support contact our Carers ACT Young Carer Coordinator

*An ACT Government funded initiative*

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