



ACT
Mental Health
Consumer Network

NETWORK NEWS

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End of Year Celebration Notice

Normally on the front page of the Summer edition of Network News, there would be notice about our end of year celebration.

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

With the weather being highly unpredictable (and predicted to be so through January) there is no certainty about our ability to hold an outdoor event, and COVID-19 restrictions would mean that we would be limited in the number of attendees for an indoor event. We anticipate that by February the weather would be more stable and predictable for us to safely hold an outdoor event.

Please keep your eyes open for a flyer in the mail early February 2021, once we have set a date and time for a Start of Year (SoY) Celebration.

After such a challenging year, we wish all of our members a very safe and restful festive season and we look forward to seeing you in 2021.

From the EO's desk



Dear Readers

Welcome to the Summer 2020 edition of the Network News.

As I'm sure you would know, the Network has been operating almost entirely online through digital means such as Zoom, Webex, Teams, email and phone. With conditions continuing to remain steady in the ACT, we are

hopeful for a return to some face to face opportunities starting in February 2021. We are likely to offer a hybrid model, where some consumers attend in person and others attend online, which will provide greater opportunity for people to participate in ways that meet their needs. To the best of my knowledge at this early stage, the first event we expect to be able to hold in this way will be the Consumer Representative Forum, so that will be our first test run!

One of the big face to face opportunities we expect to be held in February is the opportunity for consumers to come along and meet the new Minister for Mental Health—Emma Davidson. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of us all to welcome Minister Davidson into her new role. We met with her recently and it was great to hear that planned projects will still be going ahead. I'd also like to extend our thanks to Shane Rattenbury for his extensive collaborative work as the first Minister for Mental Health in the ACT. We are sure he will fulfil the role of the ACT's new Attorney-General with the same high standard we came to appreciate from him.

As you may already be aware, the Network will be having a longer than usual end of year closure period this year. The Board made the decision to officially close down the Network from Wednesday 23 December right through to the end of January this year. This will support our staffing team to take some much-needed leave and catch up on some administrative tasks—both of which have been an impossibility since March.

Sadly we will not be holding our usual end of year BBQ in December this year due to current restrictions and capacity issues with the enormous workload all of our workers—paid and volunteer alike—have been under in recent months. Instead, we plan to hold our BBQ in February to welcome everyone back, with a celebratory cake and service awards which our volunteers missed out on in November due to the pandemic.

I am pleased to report that Allie Senior—our dedicated Drop-In Volunteer for almost two years—is officially a paid employee. This was made possible through our successful application for a two year grant under the NDIS ILC Capacity Building Grants program, which also included provision for three new computers for the Members Area. These computers have now been purchased and will be ready to go for our first face to face Drop-In next year! I'd like to extend a warm thank you to Terri Warner who drafted the grant application. Without her help we would not have had capacity to prepare such a successful application.

Our Mental Health Month event this year—Strike Up Some Fun for Mental Health—was a great success! We were able to combine safety with great company and good food to give participants a fun afternoon after a long year of difficulty. Thank you to the team at Kingpin for making the event a memorable one for all the right reasons.

Finally, a quick mention of our Annual General Meeting which went off without a hitch online for the first time this past November. On behalf of the staffing team, I'd like to extend a warm thank you to outgoing Board members, as well as welcome to our returning and new Board members who were elected at the AGM or appointed shortly after to achieve a full complement of Board members ready for the new year. We look forward to working with you all in your renewed or new capacity as Board members.

Until next time, thank you for reading and for all the fantastic work our members do to improve the lot of consumers throughout the ACT.

- Dalane Drexler

Network Update

From early November 2020, staff began returning to the office on rostered days, one day a week, to reacclimatise after working remotely for so long. Once we reopen in 2021, staff attendance will be increased, in line with restrictions and best practice.

The Network will be closed for the End of Year period from 12pm on Tuesday 22 December 2020, with many of the staff taking so some additional well deserved time off throughout January. We will officially be reopening on Monday 1 February 2021.

From February we will be back on our main phone number (02) 6230 5796. If unanswered, you can alternatively try calling any of the following mobile numbers listed below. Please note that these phones are turned off at the end of each working day and on non-work days.

Management (Dalane)	executive@actmhc.org.au 0449 127 940
Consumer Representation (Jen)	representation@actmhc.org.au 0449 127 941
Policy (Isobel)	policy@actmhc.org.au 0424 468 620
Education (Petra)	education@actmhc.org.au 0408 069 423
Peer Education (Jenny)	peer.education@actmhc.org.au 0478 885 032

The Network is still being asked for consumer input on policy matters, so please regularly check your email for invitations to comment. Most consultations and other forums and events are now being held online via Zoom, with the exception of any hosted by ACT Government staff as they use Webex. If you are interested in commenting on policy but do not use email, please contact Isobel on the above details to let her know so she can send you any documents.

Drop-In

It is expected that when we reopen in 2021 our regular Drop-In will as well. It is uncertain at the time of print whether we will incorporate the online Drop-In, which we have been operating for social purposes during the pandemic. If this does continue, the details will be included in the Autumn 2021 newsletter.

Drop-In will retain the original timeslot of 10am to 1pm on Thursdays.

Funding has been received from the **Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Grants** for the purpose of improving supports for consumers to conduct their self-advocacy needs and other activities during Drop-In. Our first priority was purchasing new computers to replace the aged desktops that were in operation and were proving to be problematic.



Allie, who has been supporting members during Drop-In in a volunteer capacity, is now casually employed and will be assisting consumers who attend Drop-In and organising events and activities that are of interest and benefit to consumers.

To organise Drop-In events, we need some guidance from consumers as to the types of activities, topics or skill shortages of relevance to you and of benefit if you were more informed.

If you have ideas or wish to propose specific events, please send through an email to dropin@actmhc.org.au or call us on (02) 6230 5796.

Policy Program

Since our last newsletter, the Network has been involved in facilitating a variety of e-forums, with several e-consultations on behalf of Canberra Health Services, ACT Health Directorate and The Social Deck (an organisation engaged by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services).

Due to COVID-19, policy forums and consultations continue to be held via online platforms. The e-forums and consultations continue to be well attended by members and we have also received very positive feedback from associate organisations highlighting the value and quality of the feedback received from our members.

Policy forums and Consultations

The following e-Consultations and Policy forums were held to gain member feedback:

- Mental Health Act 2015 (ACT) support publications
- Submission: CHS Consumer Privacy Policy draft document (1 September 2020)
- National Disability Strategy Stage 2 (23 September 2020)
- Canberra Health Services Website e-Consultation (8 October 2020)
- Handout - Your Privacy at Canberra Health Services e-Forum (3 December 2020)
- Improving Mental Health Services for People with Intellectual Disability (10 December 2020)

Integrated Care Design Project, Canberra Hospital Services Reform

The Network was contacted by the lead of the Reform team at CHS seeking input to the Integrated Care Design Project program of work. As part of the initial phase, engagement with stakeholders across the whole health care system is being sought by CHS with the aim to understand NGO views and experiences and discuss the current landscape of services and integration models already in place.

Senior Network staff met via an e-meeting with the project lead and the lead clinician to outline the Network's purpose, consumer consultation model and programs.

An e-forum or e-consultation will be held when further information is received.

Safe Haven Café

Safe Haven Café is a funded project under the COVID19 Mental Health Support Package. The Network is a member of the ACT Safe Haven Cafes Steering Group and ongoing consultation and input across the ACT community sector continues. This is a co-design process and two design teams have developed proposed concepts for Safe Haven Café in the ACT. The concepts are being reviewed by the Steering Committee and ongoing opportunities for community engagement will continue in 2021.

The Network and Carers ACT held an on-line Safe Havens Café Information Session for our combined Members on 7 September 2020. The information session was facilitated by the Office of Mental Health and Wellbeing and well attended. The Safe Haven Cafes project will continue as a co-design project.

There are two sites planned for a Safe Haven Café in the ACT. Planning includes a Canberra Hospital site and a community site and confirmation of the location of sites is hoped for early 2021.

Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan (The Plan)

The Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan (The Plan) was launched on 31 August 2020 by the ACT Minister for Mental Health (at the time), Shane Rattenbury.

Work continues for the implementation of The Plan and the Easy English version is the first piece of work due to be finalised.

Quarterly Forum – Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan (The Plan)

The Network, Carers ACT and the Mental Health Community Coalition ACT held the first on-line Quarterly Forum on 15 October 2020 via Zoom. This was the first virtual Quarterly Forum of 2020. The forum included following speakers and panel:

- Dr Elizabeth Moore, ACT Coordinator General, the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Lauren Anthes, General Manager Planning, Procurement and Performance, Capital Health Network
- Terri Warner, Consumer and Consumer Representative with the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network
- Heather Lamb, Carer and Carer Representative with Carers ACT
- Angela Ingram, Chief Executive Officer, Mental Health Foundation, ACT

70 attendees joined the online forum and positive feedback received in response to the online event. Planning for the next Quarterly Forum to be held in February 2021 is currently underway.

Consumer Rep Program

As we close 2020, the Network would like to extend our sincerest thanks to all of our Consumer Representatives, who have been presented with so many new challenges during this difficult year in fulfilling their roles. Your ability to adapt to the ways that many committees changed how they were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic is nothing short of remarkable and we greatly appreciate your diligence in continuing in your representative roles.

Consumer Representative Forums (CRF) were held in October and December. Going into 2021, a review of the Terms of Reference for the CRF will be looked at regarding attendance, as Consumer Representatives who frequently attend see the Forum as an essential way to communicate on consumer representative issues and are concerned that if a Consumer Rep is not attending, they and others may be missing out on crucial information.

As reported in the last newsletter, the Consumer Representative and Community Education Programs have teamed up to deliver a CRP Masterclass at each CRF. The purpose of these Masterclasses is to further develop existing Consumer Representatives' skills and address any identified skills gaps. These classes have been designed in collaboration with Consumer Representatives. The classes have been warmly welcomed by the consumer representatives attending the Forum.

To date, the following topics have been delivered:

- August 2020 - Strategic Plan and Network Values
- Oct 2020 - My Rights, My Decisions
- Dec 2020 - Self-Care

Evalyn Smith resigned as an active consumer representative due to personal reasons. Evalyn has been a consumer representative with the Network for five years, and was awarded her five year trophy in absentia at the Annual General Meeting.

ACT Safewards Training

Three consumer representatives attended Safewards Champions training. A Safewards Working Group is to start early 2021, with Maree Pavludis and Paul Thompson to be the Network's appointed consumer representatives. Bianca Rossetti also undertook the training and will be a reserve in case one of the positions becomes vacant.

New Eligible Consumer Representatives

The Network welcomes our new Consumer Representatives, Erin Stewart and Elise Crouch.

Opportunities

The Nurses and Midwives: Towards a Safer Culture Steering Committee (New)
CHEP User Groups
ACT Recovery College Co-design Steering Committee

Appointments

ACT Mental Health Consumer and Carer Research Unit Advisory Group (ACACIA)

Jane Grace

ACT Lifespan Health Working Group

Paul Thompson

Maree Pavludis

Deahne McIntyre

ACT Safewards Working Group

Paul Thompson

Maree Pavludis

Adolescent Mental Health Unit (AdMHU) Design Steering Group

Bianca Rossetti

Seclusion and Restraint Review Meeting

Erin Stewart

Integrated Adolescent Ward Design

Bianca Rossetti

CHEP Focus Groups*

Maree Pavludis

CHEP Departmental User Group – Mental Health Short Stay Unit*

Paul Thompson

CHEP Department User Group – Emergency Department*

Bianca Rossetti

*Please note that the SPIRE Project has been renamed to the Canberra Hospital Expansion Project (CHEP) Committee

The Organisation Wide Mental Health Committee was reconvened after a hiatus and rebranded from a Committee to a Working Group. Thi-Nha Tran continued in the consumer representative role when the working group was changed into the Committee.

National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum

The ACT Health Directorate has finalised their review of nominations for the Consumer Representative for this Forum and we extend our congratulations to Jane Grace for being appointed to the Forum for the full term of 4 years.

Community Education Program

It's hard to believe that we are already in the last month of 2020! The past year has had unexpected challenges, one of which was 'How do we continue providing training for our members in a safe way, while maintaining social distancing?' Enter Zoom – all our training this year has been facilitated online, which has made it possible to provide learning experiences and a space for participants to meet and share their experience.

Distance learning causes unique challenges – for example, how to get the resources out to the participants, and how to make the learning comfortable and effective for all. It has been a steep learning curve, and we are still working on it!

The Zoom format has proved to be a flexible and convenient way of accessing training for many of our members (less travel time, not having to leave home on a cold and rainy day!) although there are issues such as data usage/internet connection/technical problems which can impact ability to participate in training.

Over the last few months, the following training was held online: Mentoring Consumer Reps, Self-Advocacy and Consumer Representation. In addition, Petra worked along Jenny from Peer Education Program to facilitate PeerZone workshops (For more information about that, see the PeerZone report!). Petra and Jen from Consumer Rep Program, have also been working together with Consumer Representatives to develop a schedule of CRP masterclasses. These are held bi-monthly at the CRP forums for ongoing skills development for our reps.

New Video Resources!

We are enjoying using the new video resources in training. So far, we have used them in Mentoring Consumer Reps, Self-Advocacy Training, Consumer Rep Training and My Rights My Decisions Workshop. Did you know the Network also has a YouTube Channel? Promo videos for our workshops have been uploaded to it, so please go there, and check them out! Just search for ACTMHCN in the YouTube search bar.

Training Calendar

The training calendar for the first half of 2021 has been set with the following workshops scheduled to be delivered via Zoom:

Workshop	Dates	Times
Self-Advocacy Training	3, 10, 17 Feb	10:30 – 4:00
Consumer Representation Training	17, 24 Feb, 3 Mar	10:30 – 4:00
Mentoring Consumer Reps	24, 31 Mar	11:00 – 2:30
Understanding the NDIS	5, 12 May	10:30 – 4:30
Peer Co-Facilitation	2, 9, 16 June	10:30 – 4:30
CRP MasterClass	2 Feb, 6 Apr, 1 June	11:00 – 11:45

For more information or to register for training, please contact Petra at education@actmhc.org.au

Peer Education

It has been a busy few months with some exciting developments.

My Rights My Decisions was granted funding from the Office of Mental Health and Wellbeing for developing an:

- electronic, type-able and accessible plain language version of the Form Kit; and
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focussed form/information brochure.

These are very important initiatives, both to make My Rights My Decisions easier to use and to help meet accessibility targets. The electronic, type-able and accessible plain language version of the My Rights, My Decisions Form Kit has been finalised and work is currently being undertaken to make this available online. Development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focussed form and information brochure is currently in progress.

Jenny recommenced delivering My Rights My Decisions workshops in October for consumers and staff at various organisations and services including Woden Community Service, AMHU, Hyson Green and also with our Consumer Representatives. The feedback received following the workshops has been very positive.

The Peer Education Program has been in discussion with Canberra Health Services about running further training in My Rights, My Decisions within Canberra Health Services.

Jenny has also been developing new Peer Education workshops which the Network is looking to run in 2021. Some workshop ideas that have been considered include:

- Having fun! – the psychology of fun as well as sharing fun things to do
- Our stories – coming up with a book of our stories
- Helping – what helping means and how we can do more
- Reasonable Adjustment for Mental Health – in employment situations
- Seclusion and Restraint – what and why

- Speaking Out – what training is available and learning from others

Through consultations with consumers, feedback has been very positive, and which workshops are of priority are being identified. It has been envisioned that the workshops will be facilitated by guest presenters where applicable.

More information about these workshops is expected to be finalised for the Autumn 2021 edition of Network News.

PeerZone

Since June 2020, the Network has supported the PeerZone facilitators to run 6 week (1 term) courses with the following organisations:

- Woden Community Services: 3 terms of workshops in June, August and October with a mix of facilitators. The first of these courses were held online, with the following courses being delivered on a mixed platform of in-person and online; and
- HeadSpace: 1 term in held in October, which was delivered online

In addition, the Network held a 1 term course over November and December and delivered online. The Network workshops in particular have been very well received, with high levels of enrolments – up to 9 for some workshops. Attendance has been very good creating some beneficial discussion.

Currently we are exploring opportunities for PeerZone to be held with other organisations so that other facilitators have an opportunity for participating in training.

From October 2020, Jenny Adams took over the co-ordination of the PeerZone training.

Since July the Network has been hosting monthly PeerZone facilitator catch-ups to support the facilitators. The catch-ups create an opportunity for the facilitators to work together, get more familiar with the PeerZone resources, and for skills development. They are also a way for the Network to try to co-ordinate all the facilitators to have opportunities to facilitate the required 5 sessions they are required to complete during the licence period.

Network Events

With the COVID-19 pandemic affecting so many things in how they are able to be run etc., to enable Incorporated Associations to meet their legal requirements, the ACT Legislative Assembly introduced a clause in the *Associations Incorporated Act 1991* (ACT) about how organisations are able to hold their Annual General Meetings, regardless of what their individual Constitution specifies. Currently the Networks' Constitution specifies that a quorum of members must be present in person for any AGM business to proceed. The new legislated clause, specific to the unforeseen circumstances we found ourselves in, enabled the Network to hold our first virtual Annual General Meeting on November 17 2020 via Zoom.

The virtual AGM saw a remarkable turn out of attendees, some of whom have only recently joined the Network, and the required quorum was reached relatively quickly. There were no guest presentations for this year and the AGM was kept to the required standard business.

Election of the Board for 2020/2021 was a straightforward matter. Online polls were prepared in the event of any required voting needing to be held, but nominations for the Board vacancies presented no contest. Only one Ordinary Member position remained to be filled following the AGM, which was rapidly filled.

The Network Board for 2020/2021 is as follows:

Chair: Bianca Rossetti (continuing)
Deputy Chair: Lachlan Atyeo
Treasurer: Paul Thompson
Secretary: Kathryn Dwan (continuing)

Ordinary Members

Phillip Green (new)
Miranda Wong (new)
Amy Ivancic (new)
Erin Stewart (new)
Ben Shipard (reappointed)
Maree Pavloudis (reappointed)
Thi-Nha Tran (reappointed)

Thank you to all members who were able to attend and make this new AGM platform such a success. We do hope for 2021 that we are able to return to holding this event in person, perhaps with the option of attending virtually as well. We hope to implement changes to the Constitution this coming year to ensure both in person and virtual members are counted towards quorum.



This year for Mental Health Month the Network took a break from our previous 'A Beary Lovely Morning' soirees (which we know disappointed a few people) and arranged a day of fun and frivolity by going bowling.

After deciding on this activity as our Mental Health Month event back in February, COVID-19 then emerged within Australia which did give us some pause about whether or not this could still go ahead. But we monitored how the pandemic was unfolding within the ACT and other areas of Australia that could have impacted on our ability to hold this and fortunately we decided that we were able to continue, albeit cautiously, with organising being in-line with the public health directives at the time.

So on Thursday 22 October we held 'Strike Up Some Fun for Mental Health' at KingPin Bowling in the Canberra Centre. While we fell short of the maximum participant number, there was still a good turnout of attendees who all had a fantastic time! After such a prolonged period of not really being able to do any type of social activity, many participants took the opportunity to just socialise and have some fun, with our Chair having too much fun and temporarily breaking a lane!

Following the main event, the remaining staff and volunteers were able to have a game by ourselves – which was a fiercely tight competition. 'Byeval' ended up winning the grand prize of absolutely nothing by 1 point over Locman, with post surgery 'Dlite' coming in last.

We wish to thank the staff at KingPin for guiding us in planning and being able to host this event, the Mental Health Month Committee for their reimbursement grant, Network volunteers who assisted in running the event and all the participants who took such a brave step in coming along!



MENTAL HEALTH MONTH ACT

As has been mentioned *ad nauseum*, COVID-19 changed how events needed to be run throughout 2020 and Mental Health Month was no exception. The majority of the official events went virtual with live streaming made available via social media. The Mental Health and Wellbeing Expo was cancelled for this year.

Mental Health Month ACT was officially launched on Saturday 10 October at 10am in a live stream event on social media, in celebration of World Mental Health Day.

The 2020 Mental Health Month launch event consisted of a video series of interviews conducted with a selection of community mental health providers in the ACT. The videos explore what services and programs are available to the Canberra public, how to engage in them and the benefits others have seen through their own engagement. The videos will form part of an ongoing resource to support the mental health journey of Canberrans.

The Launch can be accessed for viewing via Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/events/363752041660939/>

This year the Mental Health Month Awards was a smaller event that was also livestreamed, with only official guests and award recipients in attendance due to social distancing measures. The Awards were livestreamed over the Network's and the Mental Health Month

ACT's Facebook pages on October 29. In case you missed the Awards, the recording may be accessed at the following link on the Mental Health Month Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/MentalHealthMonthACT/videos/960255328128033>

The Awards were presented by His Excellency General the Honourable David John Hurley AC DSC (Retd) the Governor-General of Australia. Congratulations to all this year's Awards recipients:

Mentally Healthy Community Award:

Organisation: MIEACT YAM

Community Group: Painting with Parkinsons

Individual: Dr Rebecca Fitzpatrick, Marathon Health

Individual, Highly Commended: Loretta Wholley, Merici College

Enhancing the lives of Individuals, Families and Carers Award

Wellways COPE Mystery Teams

Innovated Person-centred Valued Supports Award

Organisation: MHJHADS, Havelock Housing & MHF (ACT)

Individual: John Neasey, ACT Recovery College

Research Evaluation Award

Dr Brett Scholz

MHCC ACT Training Grant

Advocacy for Inclusion

Mental Health Carer Award

Jodie Klaus

Highly Commended: Jennifer Adams

Leadership through Lived Experience Award – Consumer

Terri Warner

Lived Experience Ally Recognition Award (LEARA)

Maree Fish, Woden Community Services

David Perrin Award

Ariel S. Kaufman, Nexus Human Services

Michael Firestone Memorial Scholarship

Liam Adams

Jesse Dwyer

Rufus Scholarship

Jewel McMahon



Summer Emergencies

After our last disastrous bushfire season, it would be expected that many people would be feeling nervous about whether such an event could repeat itself again this summer. While the La Nina weather system will be in place over the summer months, there will be an added possibility of facing some extreme weather events as is occurring in Northern NSW/South Queensland.

The ACT Emergency Services Agency website has information and resources to help Canberrans in the event of natural disasters, as well as how you can minimise the impacts of these events on your property. You can access the information and resources by visiting <https://esa.act.gov.au/>

The ACT ESA is also urging people to be aware of the risks associated with the area they intend to travel to over the Christmas/New Year's period if they are doing so. You can find this information by searching for the Emergency Services website of the State/Territory destination.

As mental health was identified as having a major impact on people affected by bushfires, we thought it worthwhile to reprint the resource about taking care of your and other's mental health after bushfires, which can also be applied to other disastrous weather events.

In life threatening emergencies, call 000 immediately.

If you require assistance during or after an extreme weather event, please the ACT State Emergency Service on 132 500

Extreme heat

With summer apparently becoming hotter each season, being mindful of heat stress during heatwaves is necessary.

Symptoms of heat stress include: nausea, feeling faint, dizziness, loss of appetite, headache and vomiting.

Ways you can deal with heat stress:

- Avoid dehydration. Drink plenty of cool fluids, preferably water and avoid alcohol, tea and coffee. Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink;
- Wear light-coloured, loose fitting clothing where possible. Don't overdress;
- NEVER leave children or animals alone in a car, even for a very short time. The inside temperature can become life-threatening within MINUTES;
- Avoid any strenuous outdoor activities, especially when the sun is strongest between the hours of 11.00am and 3.00pm;
- Regularly check in with the young and the elderly to see how they're going. People with illnesses and chronic conditions and pregnant women may also need more care and monitoring during hot weather;
- If outside, make sure you always wear a shirt and hat – even if you are swimming and use plenty of sunscreen reapplying regularly.

And of course, look after your pets. The RSPCA has some useful information to help with your animals (<https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/what-can-i-do-in-hot-weather-to-prevent-heatstroke-in-my-pet/>) or you can call **02 6287 8100** or email rspca@rspca-act.org.au



Thunderstorm activity

The ACT Health Directorate regularly issues warnings to people with asthma, who may be more affected by the condition known as Thunderstorm Asthma during predicted thunderstorm activity.

You can access Public Health alerts via the ACT Health website (www.health.act.gov.au/public-health-alerts)

TAKE CARE
OF YOUR
AND OTHER'S

MENTAL HEALTH AFTER BUSHFIRES

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR STRESS

It is NORMAL and common to be stressed when there are bushfires. For most, this will fade with time.

SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO

- 1 Be patient with yourself
- 2 Spend time with others
- 3 Focus on your strengths
- 4 Take time out if you're angry
- 5 Remember what's important
- 6 Manage self-critical thoughts

KNOW WHEN TO GET HELP

Are you feeling overwhelmed?
Are your loved ones concerned about you?
Are you finding it hard to make decisions?
Are you unable to do your usual activities?

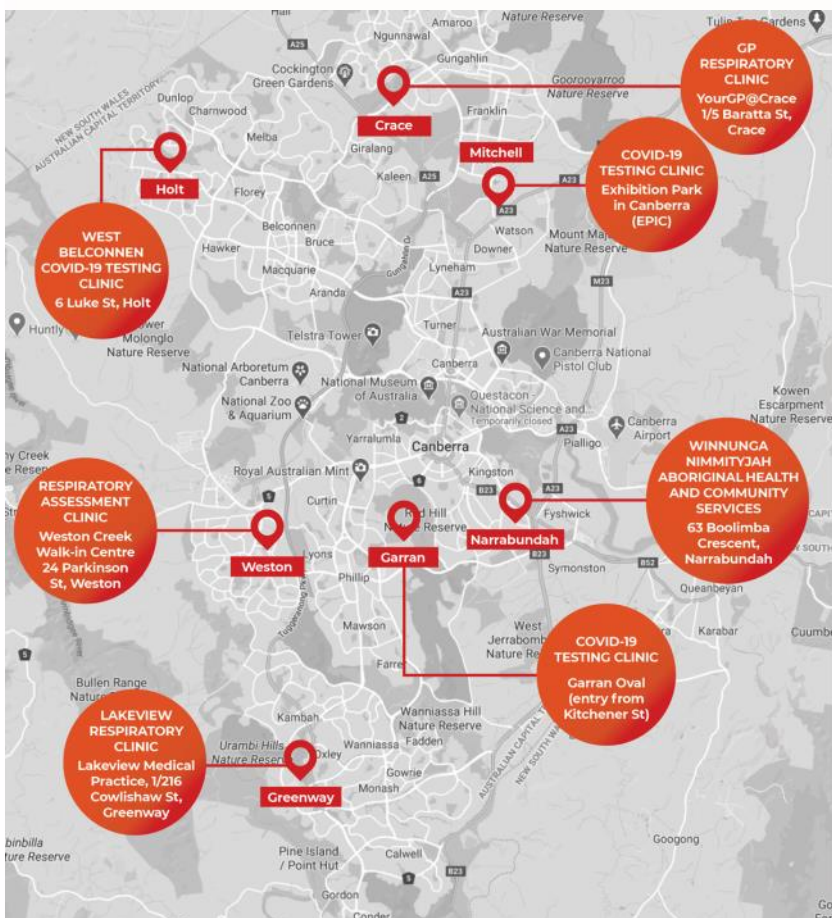
Help is available. Talk to your GP,
or contact Lifeline www.lifeline.org.au

COVID-19 Update

The ACT Health Directorate provides 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, travel advice etc. The website can be accessed at the following link <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au> and also contains links to other relevant State/Territory Health websites. 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**.

Testing locations

In response to a surge in demand for COVID-19 testing, Canberra Health Services has opened several more free testing clinics to make it easier for Canberrans to be tested. Below is a map of all COVID-19 testing locations around the ACT. The majority of testing locations do not require an appointment with the exception of the Respiratory Assessment Clinic in Weston and Lakeview Respiratory Clinic in Greenway which do require an appointment. Further information about the testing locations can be found via the [ACT COVID-19 website](https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/symptoms-and-getting-tested) (<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/symptoms-and-getting-tested>)



Staying COVID Safe over the End of Year period.

The ACT Government has issued a reminder to Canberrans about being COVID Safe during the End of Year period. While the notice and safety tips were issued with Christmas shopping in mind (by shopping sensibly, locally, or online), they can also apply to any New Year's Eve event you plan on attending.

Shopping locally and online not only helps avoid unnecessary travel, it also supports small businesses that have had a challenging year.

COVID-safe tips for Christmas shopping

- Avoid queues and crowds by shopping at off-peak times
- Maintain a distance of at least 1.5 metres between yourself and others
- Maintain personal hygiene by regularly washing and sanitising your hands, and pack your own hand sanitiser
- Look out for markings on the ground and ensure you follow them
- Use cards instead of cash, where possible
- Follow hygiene directions posted at store entry points and sign in using the Check In CBR app
- Be mindful of frequently touched surfaces such as trolleys, baskets and handrails
- Stay home if you're feeling unwell

Source: ACT Government website

Changed visitor arrangements at ACT's health facilities

All ACT health facilities and community health centres eased their visitor restrictions in late October 2020.

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, 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.

Emergency relief listings

Volunteering ACT produces two services guides for community members. The Holiday Season 2020-21 Free Meal Guide and includes listings of hamper providers. The second guide includes services for free meals, emergency accommodation and other services. Both of these guides are available from the Volunteering ACT Information Hub, located on the corner of Genge Street and Narellan Street, Canberra City or, via the [Volunteering ACT website](https://www.volunteeringact.org.au/about/publications-and-reports/info-guides/) (<https://www.volunteeringact.org.au/about/publications-and-reports/info-guides/>)

Community Support Services

The ACT Government offers community service supports for Canberrans who have been affected by COVID-19, including food hampers and wellbeing calls. You can register to receive support via [ACT Government website](https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/connect-in-canberra/Community-Services-and-Support) (<https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/connect-in-canberra/Community-Services-and-Support>) or for food hampers call 1800 431 133 (8am to 8pm daily) and for wellbeing calls 02 6234 7630 (8am to 4pm weekdays).

For mental health support the following services are available:

- Lifeline 13 11 14 (24/7)
- Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636
- Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467 (24/7)
- Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800
- Headspace Canberra: 02 5109 9700
- MensLine Australia: 1300 78 99 78
- Canberra Health Services Access Mental Health: 1800 629 354 or 02 6205 1065

Online support

[Lifeline crisis support chat](https://www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat/) (www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat/)

[Beyond Blue online chat](https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/online-forums/welcome-and-orientation/just-need-to-chat-) (www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/online-forums/welcome-and-orientation/just-need-to-chat-)

[Suicide Call Back Service online chat and video chat counselling](https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/phone-and-online-counselling/suicide-call-back-service-online-counselling/) (www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/phone-and-online-counselling/suicide-call-back-service-online-counselling/)

[Kids Helpline WebChat counselling](https://kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling) (kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling)

For all other emergencies, please call 000.

About the Network

The ACT Mental Health Consumer Network is an organisation that is run by consumers for consumers. Our aim is to bring about a higher standard of health care in the mental health sector, through representation, lobbying and active involvement in new developments in the mental health sector.

Our organisation is extremely committed to the rights of mental health consumers. We promote a respectful and accepting system that involves Consumers, Carers and Professionals listening and respecting one another in an active healthy relationship. We also promote the development of support structures for all these groups.

All people who identify as being a mental health consumer are welcome to join the Network. An application form can be found on the following pages or by filling out and submitting via our website.

Drop-In

The Network is very pleased to offer a venue for Consumers to Drop-In for a chat and a cuppa, participate in activities, and/or to use the computers or phones for their self-advocacy needs. As the ACT Government has announced a Public Health Emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Network has closed face-to-face Drop-In for the foreseeable future and is expected to reopen in February 2021.

We will notify members through our communications when we are able to recommence this service.



Level 2, Room 11
The Griffin Centre
20 Genge St, Civic
**CURRENTLY CLOSED
DUE TO COVID-19**



(02) 6230 5796



www.actmhc.org.au



[www.facebook.com/
actmhc/](https://www.facebook.com/actmhc/)



ACT
Mental Health
Consumer Network

APPLICATION FOR PRIMARY MEMBERSHIP

NB: Primary membership is **free** for mental health consumers.

CONTACT DETAILS *Your name and at least one contact address/email is required	
Title:	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Other
First Name	
Surname:	
Address:	
Postal Address: (if different)	
Email:	
Home Phone:	
Work Phone:	
Mobile Phone:	
Other contact:	
Do you have lived experience of mental illness?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (please complete the rest of the form) <input type="checkbox"/> NO (do <u>not</u> complete the rest of this form. Ask for an Application for Associate Membership instead)
COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES:	
What is the BEST way for us to contact you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Home Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Post <input type="checkbox"/> Text <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Phone

ACT Mental Health Consumer Network
Phone: (02) 6230 5796 (02) 6230 5796
P.O. Box 469, Civic Square, ACT 2608

Do you want to receive Newsletters and other information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes by email <input type="checkbox"/> Yes by post
How should we send information about AGMs and other major events?	<input type="checkbox"/> Home Address <input type="checkbox"/> Postal Address <input type="checkbox"/> Email
DEMOGRAPHICS	
Year of birth:	
Aboriginal:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Torres Strait Islander:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Language other than English:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No, English only
Gender:	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Transgender <input type="checkbox"/> Intersex <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
INTEREST and INVOLVEMENT IN NETWORK ACTIVITIES	
Self-Advocacy and Consumer Representation Training (SCR)	<input type="checkbox"/> I have completed Self-Advocacy Course <input type="checkbox"/> I have completed Consumer Representation Course <input type="checkbox"/> I want to attend ART <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not currently able to attend <input type="checkbox"/> I have completed a similar course at (organisation)
Consumer Rep Program	<input type="checkbox"/> I'm interested in becoming a Consumer Rep <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not currently able to be a Consumer Rep
Policy and Projects Program	<input type="checkbox"/> I want to be involved in discussions and projects: In these areas: <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not currently able to be involved
Network Events:	<input type="checkbox"/> I want to be involved in planning events <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not currently able to be involved

Thank you for taking the time to complete and return this information