YOUNG CARERS AT THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES OPENING CEREMONY
CARER- FRIENDLY BUSINESS AWARDS: NOMINATE TODAY
RAINBOW TICK ACCREDITATION
NEW SERVICES FOR CARERS
From the Chair

At the time of writing, Carers Queensland has just been advised that it has been successful in all five of its recent tenders for LAC Partners in the Community services in Queensland with the NDIS.

The decision to apply for Local Area Coordinator status under the NDIS was one which the organisation, including the Board, considered very carefully and with great diligence. Early on we determined to engage with the NDIS as a local area coordinator rather than a service provider which was something clearly beyond our remit and could have conflicted with our commitment to the well-being of carers.

Put simply, assisting persons with disability to develop a plan which best suits their individual needs aligns perfectly with our mission. The NDIS provides a wonderful opportunity for individuals who need assistance to live a life driven by their own aspirations and needs and this is one of the greatest services we can offer to our selfless carers.

This responsibility does not supersede or have priority over the other numerous services the organisation delivers. In fact, it aligns perfectly with them. Our LAC services complement existing programs and help us to be better resourced to deliver them.

The Board remains very conscious of its duty to carers and will not cease to ensure that the very real benefits of our partnership with the NDIS are realised practically in the lives of carers and those they care for.

Jim Toohey

From the CEO

It is certainly a busy time in community services land.

The last remaining NDIS Service Areas in Queensland are being rolled out and you would have read in the Chair’s column that Carers Queensland will be partnering with the NDIS to deliver Local Area Coordination services in Brisbane, Beenleigh, Robina, Caboolture/Strathpine and Maroochydoore Service Areas over the next three years. We are very proud of the fact that over 45% of our staff in our NDIS Local Area Coordination services identify as having disability, and over 60% of staff across our organisation have lived experience as a carer. We are excited to be offering further employment opportunities at our new locations over the coming months.

Try Test & Learn, a federally funded program, had a recent submission round where one of the priority areas was to assist carers between the ages of 16-64 years to enter or re-enter the workforce. Hopefully there will be a whole range of opportunities for carers announced over the coming months in relation to this program.

The federal government also put out a Discussion Paper on the Integrated Carer Support Services Framework, which will be implemented from 1 September 2019. Two parts of that program have already been tendered — the development of Carer Peer Support programs and a telephone counselling service for carers — and we look forward to their implementation.

If you live in Queensland and have had a business, an individual, your employer, or service provider go that extra mile to support you in your caring role, now is the time to go to our website and nominate them for a Carer Friendly Business Award. The Statewide winner and the nominating carer will be brought to Brisbane as our guests at the Carer Friendly Business Awards and Launch of Carer Week in October. Nominations close on Thursday 16 August 2018.

In other exciting news, Carers Queensland recently became the first non-government organisation in Queensland to receive LGBTI Rainbow Tick Accreditation. The Rainbow Tick Accreditation provides national recognition for organisations that have been externally and independently assessed as having met the Rainbow Tick standards. It is our assurance to current and future carers, participants, staff and volunteers that our organisation will welcome LGBTI people with inclusivity, respect and quality support.

Debra Cottrell
National Carers Week, which runs from 14-20 October 2018, is a time to celebrate and recognise the 2.7 million Australians who provide care and support to a family member or friend.

Anyone at any time can become a carer and National Carers Week is an opportunity to raise community awareness among all Australians about the diversity of carers and their caring roles.

Last year, Carers Queensland hosted over 50 events across the state, and this year will be no exception. Make sure you stay up to date with all the Carers Week news and information, including your local events, by visiting carersqld.com.au/carers-week.

How do I nominate?
You can collect a nomination form from your local Carers Queensland office or complete your nomination online at carersqld.com.au/carer-friendly-business-awards.

Regional category winners will be announced in early September and State winners will be announced at the launch event at the start of National Carers Week in October.

Apply for Carer-Friendly Business Awards

Carers Queensland gratefully appreciates the funding support from the Queensland Government to assist with regional activities during Carers Week 2018.

You can find out more about the awards and criteria for entry at carersqld.com.au/carer-friendly-business-awards.

Carer-Friendly Business Awards

This is the 15th year of the Carer-Friendly Business Awards, where we ask carers across Queensland to nominate a local business, employee, service provider or employer who is deserving of recognition for exceptional service or carer-friendly employment practices.

This is an opportunity for carers to say ‘thank you’ and to ensure the business or person who has made your life better in some way is recognised.

How do I nominate?
You can collect a nomination form from your local Carers Queensland office or complete your nomination online at carersqld.com.au/carer-friendly-business-awards.

Regional category winners will be announced in early September and recognised at regional events during Carers Week. State winners will be announced at the launch event at the start of National Carers Week in October.

National Carers Week 2018

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Awards, where we ask carers to nominate the business or person who has made your life better in some way is recognised.

This is one of the most anticipated events of the year. The event everyone was talking about. Gold Coast, Queensland was the place to be.

It was October 2017 and young carers from the local area, aged between 18 and 25, were invited by Jack Morton Worldwide (JMWW) to perform a featured role as Flag Keepers for the Opening Ceremony of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Carers Queensland's South Coast regional office did all the groundwork. Young carers had to register their interest online and commit to attend an orientation session, 10 rehearsals and the Opening Ceremony in April 2018.

Applications soon came in. For quite a while, participants only knew they would be acting as flag keepers but after the first meeting held in December last year, the whole concept became clear.

They had actually been offered a ‘once in a lifetime opportunity’ to represent their country. Carers Queensland and more than 272,000 young carers across Australia during the Opening Ceremony.

The ceremony organisers needed 71 young carers to go with each nation and territory competing in the Commonwealth Games. They clearly briefed the group of young carers on what they needed to do on the night of the Opening Ceremony.

They also explained how athletes of each competing nation and territory entered the stadium during the Athletes' Parade led by a team flag bearer.

As the athletes approached the marshalling and seating areas, the Flag Bearer had to pass their national flag to a Flag Keeper. Then, it was the Flag Keepers’ job to care for that flag for the rest of the evening.

Ceremonies rehearsals started at the beginning of February this year and went on for two months. In the week leading up to the games young carers attended eight-hour rehearsals most afternoons from 3pm to 11pm.

Then the great day finally arrived. It was April 2018 and during the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony, 55 young carers received the flags from the athletes, carried them for the last quarter of the Parade of Nations and took part of the Guard of Honour until they made it to the flag poles.

Along with the complement of young carers, young people from Nerang State High School and Yallburru also participated in the ceremony as flag keepers, representing those carers who couldn’t make it.

Overall, it was a long journey, which included a night filled with high fives, happy tears and complete satisfaction about their efforts and their contribution to the success of the event.

At some point, Tuppence Hanson, one of the young carers, could not contain her excitement.

She said she was very happy to be part of it considering the Opening Ceremony was a great platform to raise awareness about the work carers do and the role they play in our society.

“A lot of carers are caring for people with a disability, some have mental health issues and I believe anything we can do to recognise that and bring light into it, we would do it,” she said.

Jim Toohey, President of Carers Queensland said it was wonderful to see the group of young carers marching into the Carrara Stadium along with the 6,600 athletes from 71 nations during the ceremony.

“We are very proud of our young carers for the work they have done and for being entrusted with the privilege of carrying the athletes’ national flags,” Mr Toohey said.

More than a billion people around the globe watched the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games and still there are many stories that transcended the event.

For the young carers, being part of an internationally recognised event adds a rewarding and real-world experience to their lives.

They all agree on this being the best opportunity for them to share their story with the world and the Gold Coast. It was a remarkable night. A night where they made memories that will last a lifetime.

“We are very proud of our young carers for the work they have done and for being entrusted with the privilege of carrying the athletes’ national flags”
Tuppence’s life weaves a blend of challenges, obstacles and brightness. Her voice sounds optimistic and her whole story speaks of change. She was only 17 and in her final week of high school when her father had a stroke and she had to care for him. Later on, she also cared for her grandfather. As a young person, being a carer for five years and facing the complexities of that role made it hard for her to imagine a ‘normal’ life.

Today her reality is totally different. Tuppence was one of the 55 young carers that participated at the Opening Ceremony of the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in April this year.

Acting as flag keepers, representing Carers Queensland and more than 272,000 young carers across Australia, they received the flags from the athletes, carried them for the last quarter of the parade of nations and took part of the Guard of Honour until they made it to the flag poles.

For two months in a row they attended eight hour rehearsals. Tuppence describes it as the “once in a lifetime opportunity”.

“It was a really amazing experience to be part of this, to be able to represent young carers. These are people who sacrifice their youth to a degree, to care for a family member or a friend,” she said.

“It was a great opportunity to raise awareness within our community and do what we can do to bring light to it. We can bring their stories to life and also show the amazing people they are caring for too,” she added.

At 23, she reflects on past struggles and she tries to develop a greater sense of self. It will be four years in August since her father passed away and she feels stronger. She has learned a few lessons and she shares them with friends and other young carers too.

“My role was very challenging. I wouldn’t change it though. I don’t regret it. I would do anything for my family but it’s quite a big change for a 17 year old.”

“As a carer you’re always trying to keep it strong for everyone around you, but if you have the ability to share things and get them off your chest, you really feel 100 times better than if you keep it to yourself.”

“Sometimes I didn’t feel the need to share but now that I’m working as a nurse I can see what young people are going through and I think my story shows how it’s ok to go through these kind of things sometimes.”

“Caring for my father involved a lot of emotional support. While I was looking after him I had other people around me too, a good support network.”

“However, going to events and meeting other people going through the same experiences helped me a lot because no matter how amazing your friends are, they can’t ever understand what you’re going through.”

Tuppence came to Carers Queensland through her father in 2011.

“Being part of Carers Queensland’s Young Carer Support Group was really good. You get to be with likeminded people who understand the troubles and challenges you are facing, you normalise your experience by sharing it with others who are going through the same situation,” she said.

These days Tuppence is a big advocate for carers. She also runs marathons in her quest to bring attention to stroke awareness.

“More awareness needs to be raised within our communities around these topics.”

“People tend to look down as if it was someone else’s problem, but these are the people that are caring for them; these are the people who are looking after them every day, and I think that should be commended and applauded,” she said.
Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to his or her community.1

Whilst most Australians enjoy good mental health, a significant population will experience mental ill health at some time during their lifetime.

One in five Australians, aged 16-85, experience a mental illness in any one year. The most common mental illnesses are depression, anxiety and substance use disorders.2 Studies have shown that carers experience psychological and emotional distress resulting in poor physical and psychological health.3 Due to the chronic stress and daily hassles experienced in the caring role, they are at increased risk of experiencing depression and anxiety. Therefore, it is important to focus on enhancing emotional and psychological health.

Enhancing physical and psychological well-being

Physical exercise: research indicates exercise improves a person’s mood and ability to deal with stress. It doesn’t have to be strenuous, a brisk walk for half-hour each day is sufficient.

Releasing pent-up emotions: verbalising or “talking it out” can be valuable in dealing with distress. Find a good listener that you can talk to. Journaling is also an effective way of releasing emotions. Releasing pent-up emotions:

Practice gratitude: write down three positive things you appreciate about your day before going to bed. Laugh or cry: both laughing and crying trigger the brain to release chemicals (neurotransmitters), which enhance mood and relieve pain.

Find and develop a passion: find activities that make you happy, they will give you something to look forward to.

If you would like to talk to a counsellor, contact Carers Queensland on 1800 242 636. Andrew Mayes, Counsellor Carers Queensland:

- World Health Organisation (2014)
- Black Dog Institute (2016). Facts and figures about mental health

Marnie’s care was that she had a My Health Record.

“With others participating in Marnie’s care, if I’m not around and they need to take Marnie to the doctor, or if she is hospitalised, the information is there for her,” said Donna. An important element of Marnie’s care was that she had a My Health Record.

Donna and her daughter Marnie

- gives carers the capacity to upload important health information including allergies and adverse reactions; and
- enables the carer to share the dependent person’s health information with their healthcare providers.

Every Australian will be offered a My Health Record unless they choose not to have one during the three month opt out period that will run from 16 July to 15 October 2018. For more information, go to myhealthrecord.gov.au or call the help line on 1800 723 471.

Content contributed by Gold Coast Primary Health Network.

New Services for Carers

From October 2018, carers will benefit from a range of new services to properly prepare and manage daily challenges, reduce stress and plan for the future. The new services will focus on providing carers with access to early-intervention, preventative and skill building supports, to improve their well-being and better long-term outcomes.

The announcement was made by the Australian Government in March as part of the Integrated Carer Support Service (ICSS) that will provide improved supports and services to Australia’s 2.8 million unpaid carers.

Carers Australia CEO, Ara Cresswell welcomed the announcement. She said it’s been something that the organisation has been working on for a while.

“For some years now, Carers Australia and other carer service providers have been working with the Department of Social Services to design a more integrated and nationally consistent model of delivering services to family and friend carers,” said Ms Cresswell.

“The new integrated carer support services model announced will extend the range and accessibility of carer supports and address some of the fragmentation of existing services, which have been a by-product of accumulated historical changes to programs and of aged care reform and the National Disability Insurance Scheme,” she said.

“While some elements of the model still need to be fully developed and articulated, we support the overall design. However, we have made it very clear that we don’t want the implementation of the new model to be rushed and that there needs to be proper transition arrangements so that existing services don’t suddenly disappear through the lack of transitional fusing certainty, leaving significant gaps in support for carers while the new model gets up to speed,” she added.

The implementation of the ICSS will be undertaken in two phases. From October 2018, carers will be able to access a range of new services through the Government’s Carer Gateway website including:

- national phone and online counselling services to help carers manage daily challenges, reduce stress and strain, and plan for the future;
- online peer support, connecting carers with other carers for knowledge and experience sharing, emotional support and mentoring;
- online coaching resources with simple techniques and strategies for goal-setting and future planning; and
- educational resources to increase skills and knowledge of carers relating to specific caring situations, to build confidence and improve well-being.

From September 2019, the Government will establish a new network of Regional Delivery Partners across Australia to help carers access new and improved local and targeted services including:

- needs assessment and planning;
- targeted financial support packages with a focus on support employment, education, respite access and transport;
- in-person and phone-based coaching, counselling and peer support;
- information and advice; and
- access to emergency crisis support; and
- assistance with navigating relevant, local services available to carers through federal, state and local government and non-government providers, including the National Disability Insurance Scheme, My Aged Care and Palliative Care.

Ms Cresswell explained that in order to provide the additional funding needed to move to the new national model of carer support, the Government will also means test the Carer Allowance, which is currently $1271 per fortnight.

“The Allowance and the associated Carer Supplement will no longer be available to carers from households with an annual income of a quarter of a million dollars or more. This arrangement will come into effect during September,” she said.

“The Government has calculated that the change will affect about one per cent of Carer Allowance recipients, with all the savings from this measure invested into carer services.

“We appreciate that when people have become accustomed to receiving a benefit, they can feel aggrieved when it is taken away. However, the income threshold is very generous compared to other pensions and allowances, reflecting the Government’s recognition that caring can add substantially to the usual costs of maintaining a household.”

“And carers, whatever their income, can benefit from the improved services available to them to support their own health and wellbeing and their capacity to sustain care,” she said.

References:


Implementation of ICSS - Carers Australia First Magazine – Winter 2018

My Health Record – improving care for carers and their loved ones

Meet Donna. She’s a public health professional, single mum and carer to Marnie.

“One afternoon, my youngest daughter phoned me to say Marnie’s collapsed – she can’t walk. After Marnie’s brain haemorrhage, she spent nearly three months in intensive care. She had the base of her skull removed and a shunt put in. She was in hospital for 15 months,” said Donna.

An important element of Marnie’s care was that she had a My Health Record.

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Regional News

International Day of Friendship

To celebrate International Day of Friendship on Monday 30 July we caught up with some Queenslanders using their National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plans to support their social lives, build stronger friendships, and be active, engaged and valuable members of their community.

Friendship is one of the greatest treasures in life. Whether you’re happiest behind the wheel of a speed machine, checking out new shops or surfing the waves, it’s always more fun with a friend.

There is amazing diversity within the community sector and as society becomes more accessible, more people are able to make connections and find likeminded friends, whatever their circumstances.

The NDIS is a new way to support Australians with disability, and provide support to enjoy an ordinary life, including a healthy circle of friends.

Weekend away builds friendship and independence

For Ipswich-based Megan, the NDIS has created opportunities and encouraged her to reach out and meet new friends and try new things.

“I’ve been with the NDIS for about six months and my experience so far has been great,” Megan says.

“I feel like I am living again after I was in hibernation.” Megan has received lifestyle support from not-for-profit disability service provider Alara and has gained the confidence to engage in community activities including a group art class and even learning to surf through the Gold Coast Disabled Surfers Association.

“I feel inspired to try new things, I have always enjoyed art. Now I am in a regular art class and I am enjoying it,” Megan says.

With her newfound confidence, Megan has attended her local community sports club regularly, where she can enjoy the entertainment and a meal with friends and join in the activities.

Megan entered a competition and was thrilled when she was told she had won a four-day cruise. She plans to take a good friend with her and share her adventure.

Their time away included brewery tours, op shop raids, a vintage steam train ride through Bundaberg’s Botanic Gardens, and a visit to a lavender farm. They were just a little too late in the year for the official turtle watching tours, but armed with tips from friendly locals they headed off to the beach at night for their own sea turtle seeking adventure.

The four women have brought home a weekend’s worth of wonderful memories, some valuable new skills and stronger social bonds. And they’re already talking about their next trip!

Surfing the wave of social connection

For Rockhampton 20-somethings Tina, Megan, Catherine and Sarah, their recent girls’ weekend was their first holiday with a group of friends of their own age.

All four women use the NDIS and pooled their funding to cover two support workers to travel with them for a three-day getaway to Bargara on the Central Queensland coast.

While they’ve been on family holidays with their parents, this was their first trip with a group of peers.

The short break was a chance to get to know each other better and strengthen their friendships.

Tina gets hands-on with a glider at Bundaberg’s Hinkler Hall of Aviation

There’s nothing like a few days away with your girlfriends: road tripping down the highway with your music cranked up, checking out new shops, going out for a few drinks, and letting your everyday worries float away.

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James Lives Life in the Fast Lane

James likes to go fast.

Standing six foot six, with a dry sense of humour, James’ love of Holden fuels his life.

He was born with the genetic disorder myotonic dystrophy, and his mobility and independence were reduced when he fell and broke his back in three places in 2004.

The worst part of this situation for James was his inability to work with cars – the former mechanic’s greatest passion in life.

James was one of the first National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants when it rolled out in Toowoomba in 2017. The supports he has received under the scheme have been life-changing.

“My dreams for my life have now come true,” James says.

“I am now able to travel, I can go places, and I have greater independence and freedom.

“I’m the biggest fan of Holden, especially the Holden SS – it is sleek, comfortable and fast.”

Their time away included brewery tours, op shop raids, a vintage steam train ride through Bundaberg’s Botanic Gardens, and a visit to a lavender farm. They were just a little too late in the year for the official turtle watching tours, but armed with tips from friendly locals they headed off to the beach at night for their own sea turtle seeking adventure.

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With her newfound confidence, Megan has attended her local community sports club regularly, where she can enjoy the entertainment and a meal with friends and join in the activities.

Megan entered a competition and was thrilled when she was told she had won a four-day cruise. She plans to take a good friend with her and share her adventure.

Megan enjoys time in the surf with the friendly team from the Gold Coast Disabled Surfers Association in tow.

Watching her people

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Catherine checks out the science behind a Central Queensland brewery

Support provided by James’ NDIS plan has enabled him to be more socially active, including being a member of the Queensland SS Owners Club.

“I am a support driver for the Queensland SS Owners Club, and I go on race days, rallies and car shows as often as I can.

“These are my people.” Finding friends who share your interests is one of life’s greatest joys and it was through the support of the NDIS that this became possible for James.

“This has been great. I feel as though the scheme has helped me so much.”

Access to regular support worker, Matthew, means James can now travel to events and activities with all the physical help he needs.

“’I’m in a wheelchair much of the time, but I can drive,’ James says.

“…And the hoist which has been fitted to my Holden Colorado lets me get out and about in that wheelchair as frequently as I want.”

What James wants most however, is to go fast again.

Being involved with the Holden SS Club gives him a taste of that speed, and so too does his power wheelchair that he pushes to top pace whenever he gets the opportunity.

He wants to take things to one more level, with plans currently underway to specially modify his car for speed – a modification which James personally plans to test out at the Willowbank Raceway at the earliest opportunity.

“My car, when finished, will be the first of its kind,” he says.

“Holden Dealer Team vehicles are the fastest street legal cars on the planet, because they are built specifically for speed.

“There will be a fair bit of trial and error involved in modifying my Colorado, but I will eventually have custom parts including the engine, a HDT performance cam, and a supercharger.”

James unloads his wheelchair with a hoist fitted to his Holden Colorado

“I’m guessing that after modifications, my car should do a quarter mile in about seven or eight seconds.”

It is true to say of many people that their disability does not slow them down.

In James’ case, the NDIS has given him the ability to speed life up to the max and go full throttle regardless of any physical limitations – all in the company of his new circle of friends.

“I’ve never been happier,” he says.
As we age, we all need extra support with our everyday tasks. We then start thinking about long-term care and new ways to maintain our same quality of life. This, at certain points, may become a challenging process.

Carers Queensland’s Empower Care program can help take the stress out of it. Whether you are eligible for a Home Care Package or are moving into a residential aged care facility, Empower Care will provide you with the support and information you need to make the right decision about your future care.

We can help you or the people you care for, manage your own home care package or transition to aged care.

The program started in April last year, and since then, it has been supporting caring families, every step of the way.

Home Care Package Management Service

At Carers Queensland we understand the needs of caring families and we support you in managing your Home Care Package.

A Home Care Package can help you stay at home for longer with access to a range of ongoing personalised services, support services and clinical care to help with day-to-day activities.

Personal care, meal preparation, transport and community access and nursing are just some of the services you can access.

Our management fee is a flat rate of 20 per cent of services you can access.

Our New Website is Live

After months of development and hard work, we’re proud to announce the launch of our new website. The new and improved Carers Queensland’s website has been designed for our users. It provides the latest news, events, and information about the work we do in the community and it features an enhanced design, easier navigation and greater accessibility. It is also fully responsive with mobile devices, making it easy to navigate on a wide range of web browsers and portable devices.

Stay in Control of Your Future

We want you to know that we are here for you and we can make your life better. We hope you like it.

Visit our website here: carersqld.com.au

We Care About Equality

The social penalties experienced by our carer and her child do not stem from any personal failing but, from transphobia. Such discrimination and marginalisation comes at a cost to the individual - reduced social confidence and civic participation, impaired health and wellbeing and an increase in health-harming behaviours.

We take our mission to support all carers very seriously in Carers Queensland. To this end, Carers Queensland has committed to being a LGBTI inclusive organisation and in doing so, provide a culturally safe place for LGBTI carers or carers of LGBTI people to access support services.

Sarah Wallbank
Policy and Research Officer
LGBTI Ally

Are You Ready for an Emergency?

Natural disasters or severe weather events may not be something we think of everyday but they can strike at any time.

Knowing what to do and being ready is your best protection to not only surviving, but also recovering from the event.

Adverse weather events such as cyclones, floods or bushfires can affect all Australians, but they don’t affect us all equally.

These affect particularly, vulnerable people, including carers and the people they care for and support, more heavily and for longer, as they have less ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from each event.

Research from the United Nations reveals that only 20% of people living with disability could evacuate without difficulty in the event of a sudden natural disaster. This percentage almost doubles when there is sufficient warning and individuals have a disaster plan they can implement.

As extreme weather warnings increase, Carers Queensland and Australian Red Cross encourage all carers to take some simple steps to get prepared for emergencies.

Get Prepared

Getting prepared isn’t hard – it’s about taking simple steps to make you safer.

Red Cross’ Get Prepared app is a personal tool you can use to make an emergency plan. Get Prepared is free and moves you through steps that are right for you and your loved ones. Key contacts, handy checklists, and vital information is built into a personalised emergency plan that will be right at your fingertips whenever you need it.

To find out more about getting prepared and direct links to the Get Prepared app visit: redcross.org.au/prepare

Get Prepared app was developed by the Australian Red Cross in partnership with general insurer IAG.
Carer’s Week Competition

‘Why Do I Care?’ Writing Competition

There are many reasons why one in eight Australians are caring for a family member or friend. For our Carers Week Competition this year, we want to know why are you a carer – why do you care?

We understand this isn’t a simple question. You may care because of love, cultural reasons and obligation or simply because you believe you are best placed to offer the quality of life for your loved one.

There may be other reasons such as companionship, enjoying your time together, the satisfaction that you are helping others or developing new skills.

This is your chance to recognise and celebrate your achievements, while also creating awareness of the important role carers play in the community.

4 June - 15 August 2018

How to Enter

Step 1:

Write up to 150 words telling us why you care. These are your words – they may be funny or sad, deep or light, simple or complex, it’s up to you!

Start with “Why do I care? I care because...”

Step 2:

Take a photo of yourself or a photo with the person you care for.

We may display your photo and words to help create greater awareness about carers in the community.

Step 3:

Submit your entry

Email it to marketing@carersqld.com.au with your contact details and your photo attached as a JPEG file.

For more information visit carersqld.com.au/carers-week or contact us.

Entries close Wednesday 15 August 2018

The winner will be our special guest at the Carers Week Launch and Gala Lunch on Friday 12 October 2018, in Brisbane.

A presentation of all entries will be screened at regional Carers Week events throughout Queensland.

An exhibition of the entries will also be shown at the People’s Gallery, Brisbane City Hall, during National Carers Week.

Angela’s Story

A ngela, 52, feels much happier as a person after writing her book “How to get back to life”.

“I feel like I’m a person again. It all has been a big change for me,” she says.

Angela is a carer. It was only five years ago that she was recognised as one, but she started caring for her daughter when she was four, and she is 29 years old now.

Her daughter was diagnosed with leukaemia. Angela’s caring role involves not only physical but a lot of emotional support.

“My role has changed over the years. Now the problem is more about the after treatment effect, which caused her a brain injury, developmental post traumatic stress disorder, attention deficit disorder and high anxiety.”

Angela takes her daughter to appointments every week, she helps her looking after her three children, their schooling and homework.

She is also in charge of all the housework including cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping, paying bills and in general helping her daughter move forward in life.

Four years ago, she learned about Carers Queensland through her sister. She attended counselling and some of the Carer Support Groups. Today, she credits her counsellor for some of the changes in her life.

“With Carers Queensland I was able to access a counsellor. She was a big help to me when I really needed it. I could have done with knowing about the organisation many years ago.”

Angela divorced before her daughter got sick. She describes herself as a determined, positive and resilient person. However, at some stage, she says she felt like she was not achieving her purpose in life.

Because of her caring role, Angela has never been able to work easily and has always struggled to get some extra money coming in.

In the past, she did some casual work but sometimes she wasn’t even able to work at all.

She has a degree in Health Science, but was not able to use it, and has since moved into alternative health and tried Raindrop Technique, Vitalflex, Reiki and Naturopathy.

Then again, her role increased significantly and she had to stop. But she didn’t give up.

“The problem was that everything costs money and at the end of the day I wasn’t getting ahead financially regardless of whatever I did.”

“I just kept thinking this can’t be all there is. I want more out of life. I love my daughter and I would never do anything different. But I wanted more than to be a carer.”

“The only option I could see available to me as a carer, where I could use my own time, and when I could, was to do something online.”

So after doing training courses on financial education, blogging and affiliate marketing, Angela started writing a blog.

“I wanted to create time for myself. Blogging led me to writing a book, which is about carers getting time for themselves. It’s an eBook, it will be available in print eventually.”

“I feel it’s a significant achievement. If people can read it and they can get some value out of it, that’s even better”.

“With Carers Queensland I was able to access a counsellor. She was a big help to me when I really needed it.”

Angela says she is a very creative person. In addition to writing, she likes art, scrapbooking and reading.

“I have also created a website and a Facebook page. I want to help carers, lead them to places where they can find resources for when they’re stressed, find ways to increase their incomes and find out how they can be happy.”

She is a very busy woman, and so very excited about her book and what’s to come, but she also admits that she needs more time to take care of herself.

“I’m working on that. I’m starting to put some of my health knowledge into practice. I also want to travel. It’s all part of my plan.”

For more information on Angela’s book visit carersloft.com
Carers Queensland First NFP to Gain Rainbow Tick Accreditation in Queensland

Carers Queensland is the first not for profit organisation to be accredited with the Rainbow Tick in Queensland, joining a growing number of businesses in Australia offering a welcoming and safe workplace for people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI).

At the same time, we have received the Quality Improvement Council (QIC) Health and Community Services Standards accreditation, both awarded by Quality Innovation Performance Limited (QIP).

The QIC Health and Community Services Standards recognises Carers Queensland’s commitment to demonstrating ongoing quality improvement.

The Rainbow Tick Standards recognise our commitment to safe and inclusive service delivery for LGBTI people in our community.

Carers Queensland started its journey towards accreditation in January 2017 and earlier this year undertook a four-day audit across five of its service locations being Camp Hill, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Brisbane North and the Sunshine Coast.

Jim Toohey, Chair of Carers Queensland said he was really proud of this achievement, which recognises the organisation’s commitment to equality by creating an inclusive society.

“These accreditations are fundamental to being recognised as a trusted provider of quality services and employer of choice.”

“Carers Queensland recognises that being a LGBTI inclusive organisation is about the whole organisational culture – from governance to service delivery. It is about affirming and actively trying to support LGBTI people rather than just passively trying not to discriminate,” Ms Cottrell said.

“We all have the right to feel and be safe in the workplace or office. Staff and volunteers should be able to bring their whole selves to work and clients and potential clients have the right to be valued, respected and have their sexual orientation, gender identity and relationships affirmed,” she added.

Regional News

Helen (OAM) Carries Queen’s Baton

The 28 March 2018 is a day Helen Cottrell never forget. It was the day she carried the Queen’s Baton in Oakey on its way to the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Last year when Toowoomba Regional Council told her she had been nominated in recognition of the volunteer community work she does for Oakey, she could not believe it.

“Carers Queensland recognises that being a Baton Bearer is Oakey and to have my family with me who came from Gympie and Highfields for the day, was so very special for a once in a lifetime event,” she said.

Helen became a carer in 1986 after her husband received a severe acquired brain injury from a fall.

Back then, she not only joined Carers Queensland but also created and facilitated the Oakey Carer’s Support Group for 17 years.

“I was so proud and honoured to be recognised as a Baton Bearer by Toowoomba Regional Council. It was beyond belief,” she said.

Helen uses a walking stick but with medical assistance and months of preparation, she completed her section in the Queen’s Baton Relay in four minutes.

“I was amazed and so was everyone else. To have the honour of being a Baton Bearer in Oakey and to have my family with me who came from Gympie and Highfields for the day, was so very special for a once in a lifetime event,” she said.

Helen became a carer in 1986 after her husband received a severe acquired brain injury from a fall.

Back then, she not only joined Carers Queensland but also created and facilitated the Oakey Carer’s Support Group for 17 years.

“I realised that there were no facilities for carers in Oakey, so along with support from our local District Nurse, I started up a group where carers met monthly to have get-togethers and share our experiences, have some “me” relaxation time, laughs and help each other,” she added.

She had also been awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for her community work in 2011.

Ten Years at Carers Queensland

A decade after he started working for Carers Queensland, John (from our Wide Bay Office) reflects on his time working as a Counsellor and his learning experiences:

“I started with Carers Queensland on 31st March 2008, but I prefer to remember April 1st as the first day, when I first counselled carers.

I had been working in Fraser Coast and Bundaberg for the previous 10 years in Community Mental Health and in Rehabilitation, so I had already developed a network of useful community contacts that I could employ to enhance my work in counselling.

The first thing that I really noticed about working with carers was how much I did not know.

I spent a lot of time researching the various diseases, disorders, conditions and syndromes that carers were looking after. Many carers also had health problems.

As they told me their stories, their worries and concerns I became full of admiration for the hard work and care that they provided, often with little reward or recognition.

One thing that really helped, was my own history of caring.

I had not seen myself as a carer until it dawned on me that my wife and I have raised a child with Aspberger’s Syndrome, and this qualified me as a carer.

I remembered the frustrations of knowing that something was different about her, but unable to find out what it was. I also remember the relief when she was finally diagnosed at age 20.

It was a major milestone in a long and perplexing journey. I believe that this journey will last until the day I die.

I have learned a lot working with Carers Queensland and I love being able to offer assistance to this valuable group of people.

Much of my learning came directly from carers themselves. However, I must include the learning from my colleagues who have been so supportive. Today, I thank you all.”
Youth Engage

Everyone has their own strengths but for young carers, extra responsibilities in the home or social isolation can sometimes get in the way of developing or recognising these strengths.

Carers Queensland's Central regional office is proud to offer an exciting new resilience program in Rockhampton and Biloela for 13 – 18 years old, to help participants develop their own strengths and resilience skills.

Youth Engage has been made possible in the Rockhampton region through generous funding from The Black Dog Ball Committee and proceeds from The Stanwell Classic Cup. These funds will allow Carers Queensland to run four eight week programs in the area and monthly programs in Rockhampton and Biloela.

Youth Engage is an extension of the current Young Carer program for children aged 5 to 12, called It’s All About Me. These evidence – based programs are based on the FRIENDS Resilience programs, developed by world-renowned researcher Dr Paula Barrett, and participants have the potential to benefit from:

- enhanced emotional health and well-being
- improved ability to reach their full potential
- developing social skills
- identifying personal strengths
- creating supportive networks, and
- improving your educational outcomes

The Young Carer groups give the opportunity to young people who care for a loved one or have a sibling with a disability, to spend some time solely on themselves and learn in a safe environment with trained facilitators that specialise in working with carers.

It’s a time for them to be able to think about their own wants and needs, develop their skills in areas that will help them to enjoy being carers and build safe networks with others who understand and share their situation.

It’s All About Me has been running for almost three years, through funding from The Smith Family – Communities for Children, and has shown positive results in building skills in resilience and self-awareness in both participants, but also having a flow on effect which shows the family functioning to increase greatly.

For information of Youth Engage, please contact project facilitator, Sam King on (07) 4994 1644 or sking@carersqld.com.au

Youth Engage Project Officer, Sam King

Progress Through Failure

Scepticism is due to not only cost, but also an acknowledgment that along with these advances, there is a “weight” of perfection that must be adhered to when dealing with people’s health. This is challenging for the health care industry. It can be a barrier to action when implementing small advances that can potentially add up to ground-breaking movements in health care.

Progress is made through testing, breaking, failing, winning and moving forward - but scepticism of those in tech-health, could be limiting the “small win” progress, which is so important to developments in care-tech.

The challenge for the technology industry lies in convincing the health care industry to get on board with the development of new technology. The best way to ensure this is by them being part of the development process.

Care providers will need to make the leap into using technology while ensuring that any associated cost is offset by benefits to their business and those in their care.

Constant change will in the end, be far more beneficial to users of technology and allow them to come on board at the point that is right for them. We will never find one tech based solution that can do everything - so we need to help educate the health care industry on why their input and collaboration is so important.

Ben Slater, Co-Founder of RightMinder.

Learn more about RightMinder at rightminder.com

The Connected Carer

It is an undeniable fact that the advances in the manifestation and connectivity of technology has opened up amazing opportunities for the broader health industry.

However, arguably, those in this industry tend to treat the opportunities with a large degree of scepticism.

One reason for this approach to carer assistive technology is expense. Investment and rollout can be costly and, for this reason, the health care industry needs to be sure that it is investing in the right options.

There would be questions like will the technology assist in the daily duties of care workers? Will it enhance the independence of those in care? And most importantly, will it keep those in our care safe?

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Shine Lawyers have been providing everyday Australians – including carers – with access to support and justice for over 40 years. We stand up for what is right, provide a voice to those who would otherwise be unheard, and help those in need get their lives back on track.

Shine Lawyers are proud supporters of Carers Queensland.

To view the full list of legal services available to support carers and their families, visit shine.com.au/service

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