

Carer Advocacy Influencing Outcomes Speakers Bank

Participate in Health Conference

Melbourne

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Presenters

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Carer Definition

A CARER is a relative or friend who provides unpaid care to someone with care support needs, who may be frail aged, have a disability, mental illness or chronic illness

Carer Demographics

- **2.6 million carers** in Australia
- More than **690,000 in Victoria**
- **71%** of primary carers are women
- About **400,000 carers are young** people under 25 years
- Only **39%** of primary carers participate in the workforce

Economic Value of Unpaid Care

- The work of unpaid carers contributes enormously to the Australian economy
- **Carers save** the Federal Government *alone* about **\$30.5 billion annually**

(sources – see last slide)

Carers Victoria

- The *only* statewide organisation in Victoria with **unpaid family carers as its *primary focus***
- Offers direct services (including carer counselling) to support carers in their caring role
- Offers education and training and advocacy programs to increase awareness of carers and caring issues within the community
- Researches carer needs, develops policy and actively lobbies governments and service providers for improved recognition of and support for family carers
- Lobbies for flexible services, carer-inclusive practices, and carer-involvement in policy and decision-making

Carers Victoria Speakers Bank Background

- Established in 2001 – to involve carers in the process of changing the service system
- Carers (former and current) - Carers Victoria members (metro and regional) recruited to participate in a range of speaking activities
- A positive proactive opportunity for carers to engage with other carers, the community, service providers and governments about caring issues and carers' needs

Carers Victoria Speakers Bank Background

- Carers share their personal stories and experience of caring
- They present a carer's perspective on caring issues, they DO NOT represent Carers Victoria
- They contribute to raise community and government awareness and understanding of the *real* experience of caring

What Speakers Do

- Public Speaking (to carers, service providers and the public)
- Media interviews (press, TV, radio, etc)
- Research interviews (government, universities)
- Letter writing (to media, governments)
- Writing their stories (newsletters etc)
- Participating in reference and focus groups, consultative committees

Speakers' focus

Speakers Bank speakers focus on telling their personal carer story

- How/why they became a carer
- Their caring journey (and its changes)
- Their tips for caring effectively, and looking after themselves (eg coping with caring, using respite, carer education, humour)
- Negotiating the maze (coping with service providers, Centrelink, government, etc)

Support for Speakers

Carers Victoria provides

- Training - Induction and skills development
- Assistance with preparation and resources
- Support on the day (if required)
- Follow up of issues
- Facilitation of workshops/get together for speakers to support each other

Training for Speakers Bank Participants

Training sessions for Speakers Bank participants:

- Induction
- Presentation skills
- Having your say - advocacy
- Working with the media
- Assertiveness

Rights of Speakers

- Right to say NO to a request
- Right to withdraw from an interview
- Right to cancel an engagement and/or to withdraw temporarily or permanently from Speakers Bank
- Right to refuse to comment on issues or criticisms about Carers Victoria or other organisations

Outcomes for Speakers Bank Participants

- Confidence, self-advocacy skills, a new sense of purpose
- Validating carer experience (for self and other carers)
- Gaining new skills in presentation and working with the media
- Influencing community attitudes
- Influencing adoption of more carer-friendly policies and practices by governments and service providers

Outcomes for Government, Community Service Providers

- Insight into carers' needs and caring issues
- Including carer perspective in policy, decision-making and training
- Recognising that spending millions on carer support saves billions \$
- New perspective on health challenges
- Co-operating towards happier, healthier families and better community care

Speakers Bank Requests – 2006 Examples

Public speaking - community forums

- Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre, Southern Region – “Finding the Balance” for older carers of person/s with a disability
- Migrant Information Centre “Caring for Carers” CALD community expo
- Austin Health “Aged Care Services and Resources” – Carer Panel

Speakers Bank Requests – 2006

Examples

Media Interviews

- Victorian Community Care Coalition launch of report “Moving to Centre Stage: community care for the aged over next 10 years”
- Taskforce on Care Costs launch of report “Telling it like it is” – the real picture of work and care costs Radio National interview “Ageing Carers”
- Women’s Weekly interview “Issues related to placing parent in residential care and care innovations”

Speakers Bank Requests – 2006

Examples

Focus Groups

- Beyond Blue “Caring for older person with depression”
- RDNS “Caring for person with dementia”
- Connex Train Travel “Travel – carer perspective”
- Palliative Care “Better communication of issues – illness, death, palliative care”

Speakers Bank Requests – 2006

Examples

Reference and Consultative Groups

- DHS: Individualised Planning and Support Advisory Group – 2 year research project on supporting people with a disability
- DHS: Carer/Consumer Reference Group – “Best Practice in Person-Centred Health Care for Older People” project

Speakers Bank Requests – 2006 examples

Training Workshops

- Dept Health and Ageing workshop – 'Partnership' – looking after yourself
- DHS Disability Services: "Ageing Carers" workshop – interacting with disability services and planning for future of son/daughter

Speakers Bank Requests – 2006 Examples

Public speaking to groups

- St Vincent's Health senior managers – caring, from the carer's perspective
- CC Regional Carer Service carers group – validating the caring role and need to care for self
- Community Health Service carers group – coping with caring
- Carers Victoria staff orientation – the impact of caring

Speakers Bank Member

Margaret Baulch, who is a family carer, will now talk briefly about experiences of participating in Speakers Bank

Statistical Sources

- *Australian Bureau of Statistics (2004) Disability ageing and carers: summary of findings, Vol 4430.0*
- *Access Economics (2005) The economic value of informal care: a report prepared for Carers Victoria*
- *NATSEM (2004) Who's going to care? Informal care and an ageing population: a report prepared for Carers Australia*