

# Carers' Needs in a Public Mental Health Setting

Identifying, recognising and supporting Carers

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# Project Background

- Carer support Coordinator role Metro South Mental Health
- Identifying a service gap
- Bridging the policy to practice divide

# Why support Carers?

- Carers play an essential role in recovery but many do not feel recognised
- Lack of support for Carers correlate to poorer consumer outcomes
- Carers have poorer health and wellbeing



Private Mental Health  
Consumer Carer Network (Australia)

*engage, empower, enable choice in private mental health*

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# Carers Identified?

## FINAL REPORT OF THE PROJECT TO DEVELOP

**Nationally consistent policies and good  
practice protocols to identify carers of  
people with a mental illness**

**and**

**Nationally consistent information for  
carers on admission to a service**

**FOR  
THE COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND AGEING**

Project Manager  
Ms Janne McMahon

Project Officer  
Mrs Judy Hardy

# Difficulty conveying messages about mental health carers



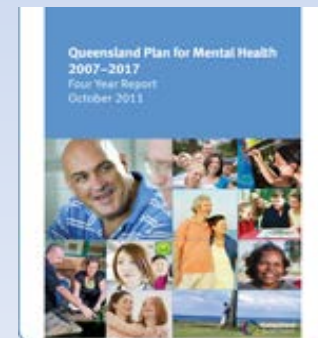
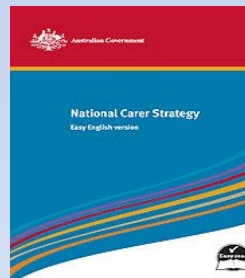
# Broadening the Campaign

- ABC is joining the dots on mental health



# Policy and Legislation context

- The National Standards for Mental Health Services-2010, Standard 7: Carers
- Federal Carer Recognition Act (2010)
- National Carer Strategy

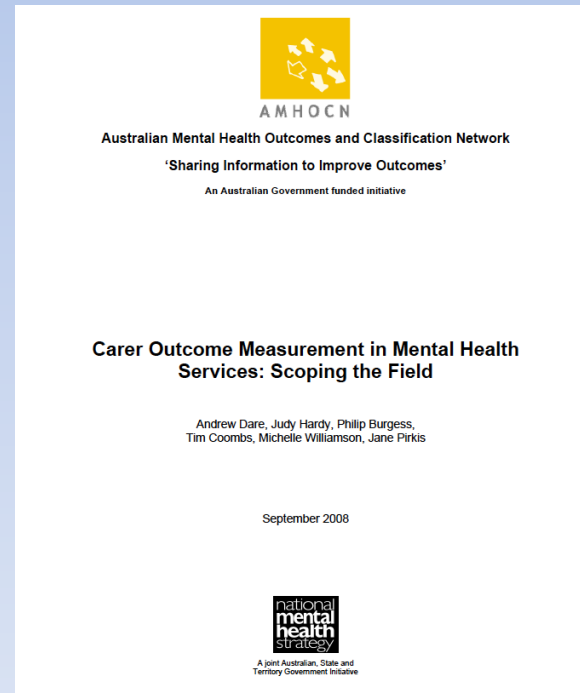


# Policy and Legislation context

- Queensland Plan for Mental Health 2007-2017
- Queensland's Carer (Recognition) Act 2008
- Queensland Mental Health Services Consumer, Carer and Family Participation Framework-2010
- Information Sharing between mental health workers, consumers, carers, family and significant others 2011

# Policy and Legislation context

- Australian Mental Health Outcomes and Classification Network (AMHOCN) ([Dare et al., 2008](#))



# Carer Assessment Scale

- CarerQol-7D+Visual Analogue Scale  
([Brouwer, et al., 2006](#))

CarerQol-Instrument

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CarerQol-7D

Please draw an "X" to indicate which description best fits your current care giving situation

a. I have ☐ no ☐ some ☐ a lot of fulfillment with carrying out my care tasks.

b. I have ☐ ☐ ☐ relationship problems with the care receiver (e.g., he/she is very demanding, he/she behaves differently, we have communication problems).

c. I have ☐ ☐ ☐ problems with my own mental health (e.g., stress, fear, gloominess, depression, concern about the future).

d. I have ☐ ☐ ☐ problems combining my care tasks with my daily activities (e.g., household activities, work, study, family and leisure activities).

e. I have ☐ ☐ ☐ financial problems because of my care tasks.

f. I have ☐ ☐ ☐ support with carrying out my care tasks, when I need it (e.g., from family, friends, neighbors, acquaintances).

g. I have ☐ ☐ ☐ problems with my own physical health (e.g., more often sick, tiredness, physical stress).

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CarerQol-VAS

Please draw an "X" on the scale below to indicate how happy you feel currently

Completely unhappy Completely happy

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

### CarerQol-instrument

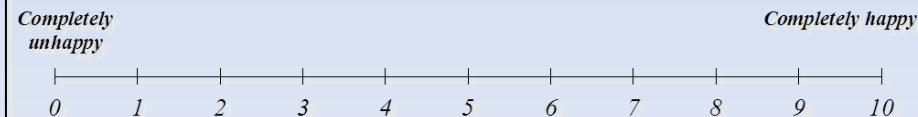
CarerQol-7D

Please draw an "X" to indicate which description best fits your current care giving situation

- |           | no                       | some                     | a lot of                 |  |
|-----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| a. I have | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | fulfillment with carrying out my care tasks.   |
| b. I have | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | relationship problems with the care receiver (e.g., he/she is very demanding, he/she behaves differently, we have communication problems). |
| c. I have | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | problems with my own mental health (e.g., stress, fear, gloominess, depression, concern about the future).                                 |
| d. I have | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | problems combining my care tasks with my daily activities (e.g., household activities, work, study, family and leisure activities).        |
| e. I have | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | financial problems because of my care tasks.   |
| f. I have | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | support with carrying out my care tasks, when I need it (e.g., from family, friends, neighbors, acquaintances).                            |
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### CarerQol-VAS

Please draw an "X" on the scale below to indicate how happy you feel currently

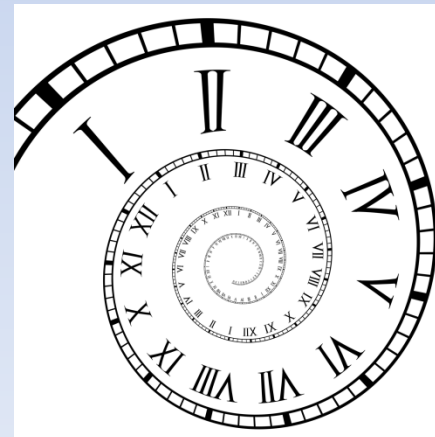


# Organisational Context

- Guidelines for QLD Health
- KPIs
- Internal restructure (Academic Clinical Units) and momentum for positive change
- Social work contribution to interprofessional practice
- Evidence based practice

# What we have done

- Attempt to identify and support Carers
  - Strategic support within the organisation
  - Building team support
  - Designing pilot study/Literature Review
  - Explanatory statement
  - Consent
  - Project Plan
  - Time



# Explanatory Statement - beginning

## **Who is a carer?**

- A carer is any person providing care or assistance to a person with a physical or mental health need. It is a supporting role that can take many forms.
- A person who provides care and support to another person can be male or female, young or old, and/or from a diverse cultural background. We come across carers who have had many varied life experiences and we welcome this diversity as part of the rich community in which we live.

## **Why are carers' needs important?**

- It has been recognised that the role of a carer is not always an easy one. Carers of people with a mental illness are at a greater risk of having poorer health and wellbeing outcomes compared to those not caring. Caring can be costly and also contribute to family relationship strain. Many carers feel isolated and overwhelmed at times in their caring role.

## **What is the aim/purpose of this study?**

- In this study, we want to identify and engage carers to try to meet their needs, to support them and to support consumers.
- There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that carers' needs are not recognised or taken into account as much as they could be by mental health services. It is hoped that by introducing a way to recognise carers, identify and attempt to meet their needs, that there will be better outcomes for both carers and consumers.

# Where to from here

- feedback and brief data analysis
  - Positive results
- Carer services
  - Keeping up to date
- Scope for other teams at the PAH
- Strategy... plotting success

# References

- Australian Government 2010. National Standards for Mental Health Services 2010.
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