

6 February 2008

Carers NSW 'Gathers the mob'

On Wednesday 13 February 2008 Carers NSW will hold a special 'Gathering of the mob' with local Aboriginal carers and service providers in Dubbo.

Taking place the day before Carers NSW opens its new local office, the Gathering will bring together Aboriginal carers and service providers to discuss issues for carers and look at the types of support they may need.

Chief Executive Officer of Carers NSW, Elena Katrakis, who will host the gathering, said Aboriginal carers will also get to hear about the ways in which Carers NSW can help them.

"At the Gathering we will be talking about the services we offer to all carers across NSW which include counselling, advice, publications and information and referral," said Ms Katrakis.

"We also run two vital programs for carers from our office in Dubbo: the Family and Carer Mental Health Program which offers support and education for carers of people with mental health problems, and the Older Parent Carer program which is designed to help support older carers looking after an adult child with a disability.

"Also on the agenda will be the particular issues faced by Aboriginal carers, which we know are more pronounced than for non-Aboriginal carers," she said.

One major issue according to Carers NSW Aboriginal Development Officer, Sheree Freeburn, is the significantly higher proportion of carers in the Aboriginal community compared to the non- Aboriginal population.

"Aboriginal people have considerably worse health than the rest of the population, which leads to greater numbers of people requiring care, and in turn higher proportions of carers. These carers may also themselves be in poor health, which can exacerbate the physical impact of the caring role," said Mrs Freeburn.

"We also know that within Aboriginal culture it is taken for granted that family members look after one another, and many people do not identify themselves as carers, therefore missing out on services and support they are entitled to.

"We encourage Aboriginal carers and organisations to attend the Gathering or telephone one of our workers on 6884 7200 in confidence to find out about the help and support available to carers in Dubbo," said Mrs Freeburn.

What: 'Gathering of the Mob'

Who can attend: Aboriginal carers and service providers. All media welcome

When: Wednesday 13 February 2008, 10am-4pm

Where: Coolabah Room Western Plains Cultural Centre, Dubbo

Carers are family members or friends who provide unpaid care for people with a disability, mental health problem, chronic condition or who are frail aged. Carers NSW is the peak organisation for carers in New South Wales and the only state-wide organisation that has carers as its primary focus.

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