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## MEDIA RELEASE

### Well Ways looks to lessen Mental Health impact on carers

Local carers of a person with a mental illness are encouraged to take advantage of a free education program being run by Carer Assist, which is designed to support them in their role.

Carers can be parents, partners, a brother or sister, friends or neighbours, who may provide care for a few hours a week, or all day every day.

Carer Assist is a non-government organisation that is funded by the NSW Health Department through the Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Office to provide information, advocacy, support and education to family members and friends of people with mental illness.

Carer Advocate Carly Vesela says "Mental illness affects one in every five Australians and 62% of people with mental illness receive no assistance at all, or depend on support from carers and families.

"Therefore it is vital that as a community we provide care and support to those that care and support people with a mental illness."

The 'Well Ways' Program provides a broad and sensitive perspective to the many issues facing families as they manage the impact of mental illness on their lives.

There are many dilemmas and complexities within the caring role and the program provides an insight into behaviours associated with mental illness and provides a practical framework to improve communication and problem solving skills.

Topics covered include up to date knowledge of mental illnesses, developing coping skills and stress management, practical skills for carers, emotional aspects of caring, community resources, a carer's experience, legal issues and more.

It consists of eight three-hour weekly group sessions plus four follow-up workshops over 12 months.

Carers will have an opportunity to share experiences, learn from others' experiences and develop ongoing support and information networks for themselves.

There is no cost to take part in Well Ways – but bookings are essential. The evening course starts Wednesday 7 May and will be run in Queanbeyan. It is open to carers in the ACT as well as NSW.

For further information, travel assistance and to secure a place in this program, please contact the Queanbeyan Carer Assist office on 02 6232 9044 or email [infogs@carerassist.org.au](mailto:infogs@carerassist.org.au)

**Ends**

*For further information please contact Iain Robinson, Communications Officer on (02) 9879 2600 or 0419 436 967.*