



Funding Proposal

Indigenous Carers and Communities Projects

March 2008

Indigenous Carers and Communities Projects Funding Proposals

Background

Indigenous carers – a priority for the Network of Carers Associations

Carers Australia, and other carers associations ('the Network of Carers Associations'), have identified support for Indigenous carers as a national priority – that is, support to better maintain Indigenous carers' own health and wellbeing, and strategies to assist them to better support the person(s) for whom they care.

It is well-accepted that Indigenous Australians have a much lower life expectancy and health outcomes than non Indigenous Australians. Because of their low health status many Indigenous people are providing unpaid care to at least one person with a disability, a chronic condition, a mental illness, a terminal illness or who is frail. At the same time, some are also providing care for other family members, eg grandchildren. However, there is little acknowledgement of the need for, or existing programs for, the special needs of Indigenous carers. Some Carers Associations are working with Indigenous carers and communities, but there is no sustainable program specifically targeted at Indigenous carers. In December 2007, Carers Australia coordinated an Indigenous Carers and Communities Roundtable in Melbourne. Findings from this consultation have informed this proposal, as well as the attached Draft Discussion Paper on Indigenous Carers and Communities, and Carers Australia's Final Report on the Carers Health Care Project, January 2008.

Indigenous health – A COAG priority

At its 20 December 2007 meeting the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) included Indigenous Reform as one of its seven work areas for 2008. Areas for improvement pertinent to this funding proposal include:

- reducing alcohol and substance abuse and its impact on families, safety and community wellbeing
- access to suitable primary health services
- involving local Indigenous people in the formulation of programs that support them
- optimal service delivery for small remote communities (ref: <http://www.coag.gov.au/meetings/201207/index.htm#ind>)

Indigenous Australians were also included in other COAG areas, e.g. 'Health and Ageing':

- the new Preventative Health Care Partnership, with particular emphasis on children and Indigenous Australians, will include, the key risk factors driving increasing rates of diabetes, cancer and poor mental health
- linking with broader consideration of social inclusion and Indigenous reform, given the importance of health and wellbeing to tackling disadvantage

Carer Australia's Training initiative with Indigenous carers

Carers Australia and Carers NT completed a pilot project focusing on carer education and train-the-trainer with Indigenous carers in Ti Tree, a remote community 200 kms north of Alice Springs, following a request from a group of local Ti Tree women to develop and deliver a special program to train carers and health workers. The project was conducted at the Anmatjere Aged Care and Disability Respite Centre. Five training

modules and resources were developed, which can be delivered as a package or as separate modules. Shared health care (or self care) principles for chronic condition self management were incorporated into the program. The project was funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing through its Shared Health Care Initiative.

Funding request

This proposal seeks funding for two significant projects:

1. Nation-wide consultation to develop a National Indigenous Carers and Communities Framework, using the Carers Australian Indigenous Carers and Communities Discussion Paper (see attached document)
2. National Indigenous Carers and Communities Education and Training Program to be delivered through a small number of Carers Associations

1. Nation-wide consultation

It is proposed that the Discussion Paper developed by Carers Australia with input from the National Indigenous Carers and Communities Roundtable held in Melbourne, December 2007, will form the basis of consultation across Australia.

Carers Australia will consult nation wide with Indigenous carers, Indigenous health workers, Indigenous communities and service providers to develop a National Indigenous Carers and Communities Framework to inform policy and program development for Australian governments and the Network of Carers Associations. There will be at least 2 consultation meetings in each state and territory, including regional areas, with more in the larger states. The consultation process and further input to the Discussion Paper will be guided by the Indigenous Elders and Workers Advisory Group. Membership of this Group** currently stands as follows:

<i>Joan Hughes</i>	<i>CEO, Carers Australia</i>	<i>Co-chair</i>
<i>Edna Snape</i>	<i>Elder and Coordinator Anmatjere Aged Care and Disability Respite Centre</i>	<i>NT</i>
<i>Sherry Carroll</i>	<i>Koori Carer Support Officer, Carers NSW</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Sheree Freeburn</i>	<i>Aboriginal Carer Coordinator, Carers NSW</i>	<i>NSW</i>
<i>Brian Butler</i>	<i>Elder, former SA Commissioner ATSIC</i>	<i>SA</i>
<i>Lester Coyne</i>	<i>Elder, Indigenous Educator and Trainer and former Chairperson Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages</i>	<i>Victoria</i>
<i>Agnes Shea</i>	<i>Elder</i>	<i>ACT</i>

**Further nominations will be made by each state and territory carers association to bring the total to no more than 18 (1-2 representatives from each association, one Elder and one Indigenous worker, and 2 from Carers Australia)

Timeframe:

April 2008 – October 2008

Carers Australia will:

- Appoint a Carers Australia policy officer
- Liaise with Carers Australia Indigenous Elders and Workers Advisory Group (IEWAG) to develop consultation framework and finalise consultation documentation
- Arrange consultation schedule
- Consultation process (to include local IEWAG representatives and Carers Australia representatives) in each state and territory (note additional consultation will occur in some states and the Northern Territory)
- Compile feedback from consultations
- Final consultation report

Anticipated project cost:

\$150,000

2. National Indigenous Carers and Communities Education and Training

The trial train-the-trainer program 'Looking After Ourselves' was developed in consultation with remote Indigenous carers and their community and Indigenous health workers. It can be delivered as a package or as stand-alone modules. It incorporates chronic disease self management principles, and was particularly designed to assist Indigenous carers to manage their own health and to better manage their caring role. Feedback from the National Indigenous Carers and Communities Roundtable indicated that elements of the program (eg 'Worry Cycle' and 'Looking After Me' action plan) could be used in a range of settings and for various Indigenous issues. The program development also fits within national strategies for working with, and delivering education programs to, Indigenous Australians.

Carers Australia proposes to trial the 'Looking After Ourselves' training program in three different locations around Australia, and to test its adaptability to other Indigenous health issues (eg adaptation of the 'Worry Cycle' to assist to remove barriers to improve Indigenous use of health services, both Indigenous and mainstream).

Timeframe:

April 2008 – March 2009

Carers Australia will:

- Appoint a Carers Australia project officer
- Appoint an advisory group
- Invite three Carers Associations to participate in the trial, via an Expressions of Interest process, with the criteria that the program will be trialled in a variety of settings around Australia, including consultation with local Indigenous carers and their communities to identify their priorities and preferred delivery method
- Coordinate and monitor each association's trial of the modules
- Evaluate trial
- Prepare final report and recommendations

Anticipated project cost:

\$350,000