

# Working with Families & Carers in Correctional and Forensic environments

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**Health**  
Justice Health and  
Forensic Mental Health Network

### Far West & Western LHDs – Catholic Care Wilcannia-Forbes

- Narromine (02) 6889 4932
- Bathurst (02) 6334 2033
- Broken Hill (08) 8087 3477
- Orange (02) 6360 0587
- Dubbo (02) 6883 4600
- Mildura (03) 5051 0058

### Hunter New England LHN – One Door

- Armidale (02) 6772 3211
- Muswellbrook (02) 6542 3555
- Tamworth (02) 6761 3222
- Taree (02) 6551 4333
- Inverell (02) 6721 4197
- Mayfield (02) 8315 1450

### Northern NSW & Mid North Coast LHDs - Mission Australia

- Port Macquarie (02) 6589 5017
- Lismore (02) 6623 7401
- Sawtell (02) 6658 7831
- Tweed Heads 0409 818 643

### Sydney & South Western Sydney LHDs One Door

- Bankstown (02) 9708 2670
- Campbelltown (02) 4620 5255
- Moss Vale (02) 4868 2755

### Central Coast & Northern Sydney LHDs Parramatta Mission

- Chatswood (02) 8599 4855
- West Gosford (02) 4322 1855

### Western Sydney & Nepean Blue Mountains LHDs – Parramatta Mission

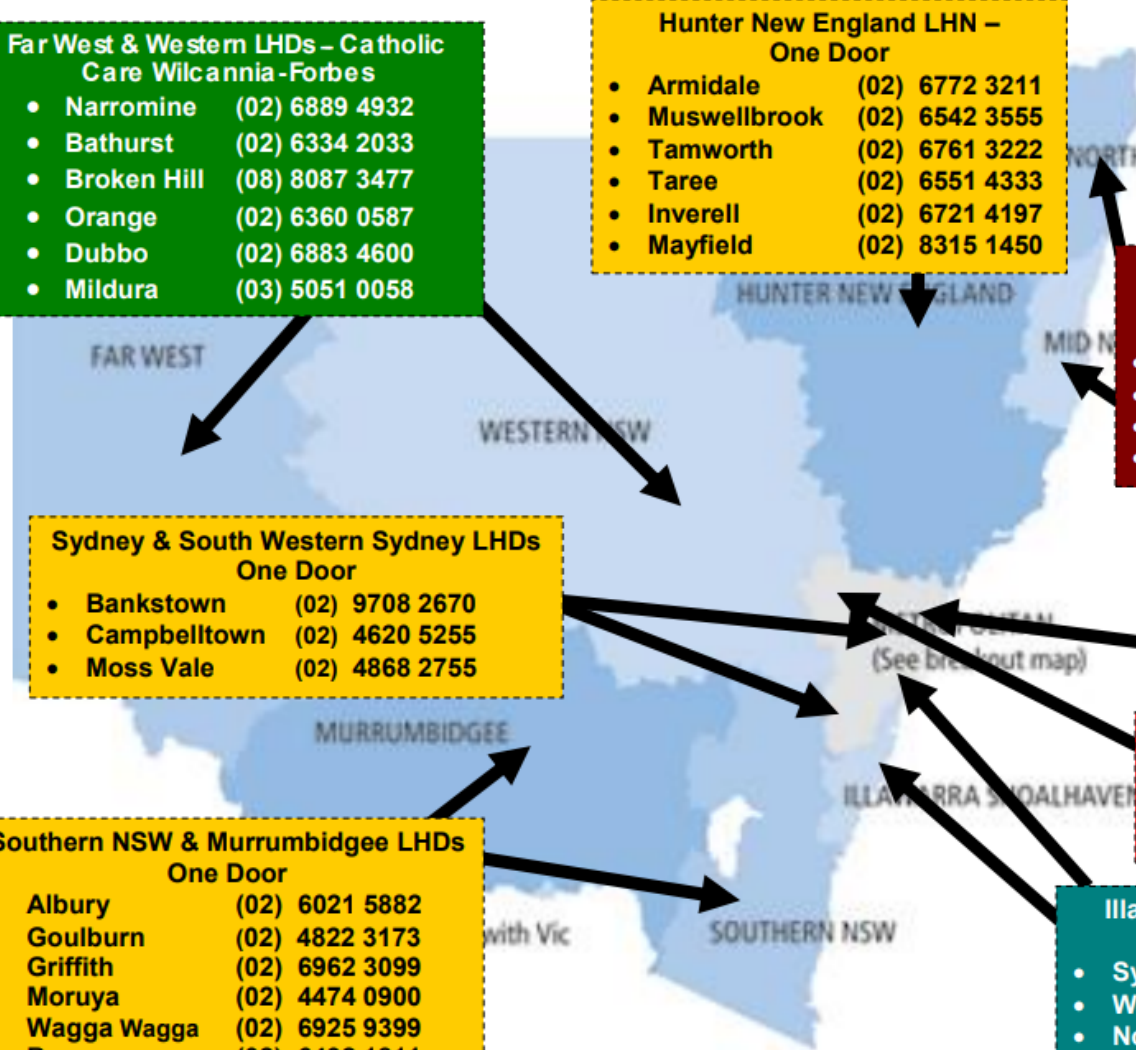
- Seven Hills (02) 8599 4880
- Penrith (02) 8880 8160

### Southern NSW & Murrumbidgee LHDs One Door

- Albury (02) 6021 5882
- Goulburn (02) 4822 3173
- Griffith (02) 6962 3099
- Moruya (02) 4474 0900
- Wagga Wagga (02) 6925 9399
- Bega (02) 6492 1811

### Illawarra Shoalhaven & South Eastern Sydney LHDs - Aftercare (FACES)

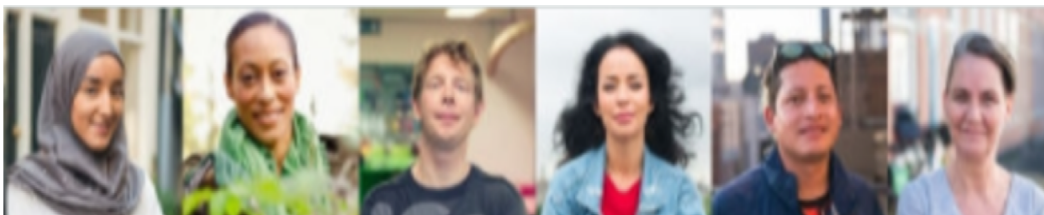
- Sydney (02) 9398 9738
- Wollongong (02) 4229 7254
- Nowra (02) 4422 1547
- Hurstville (02) 8287 6810





# Numerous requests from carers to have events to support their unique needs

- recognize carers are important contributors to the care of a person receiving mental health care in custodial/forensic environments.
- No road map for carers – where/who to go to contact
- limited/no support structure in place to meet these carers specific needs
- qualitative data (F&C Survey's) indicated that carers were wanting such a network: in a safe and supportive environment.....



## Carers told us.....

“There is nothing out there to help me, I can't tell people what my son has done as I feel ashamed by what he has done. I don't want to talk to other parents, some ligatures are going on in the prison.”  
*Carer, Correctional MH patient*

“We've been badly let down by the MS service before our son did that (I/O). We didn't know who to talk to anyone or who to trust. My wife was too scared to leave the house.”

“I joined a carers group and wished I hadn't. As soon as I told my story (that my son had committed a crime) I was astounded by the response of the other carers, yet we all had mentally ill children”  
*Carer, Correctional MH patient*

“I desperately needed something there when I was alone. I wasn't the only parent in the world.”  
*Parents,*

# Aims and structure of the Forensic Carer Network Event (CNE)

Supporting and building on carers' individual and collective needs the CNE aimed to provide:

- an educational aspect;
- a service development aspect;
- networking;
- coping strategies.

# Carers responses after the first CNE

"I thought I was all alone  
Talking to other carers  
met today  
not (alone)"

"what a great start  
..this has been a  
long time coming  
to fruition" *Carer  
FP*

'We talked,  
laughed, got angry,  
shared some sad

and with other  
right away .....and

"Being heard  
and listened  
too – it was  
great" *Carer  
FP*

that meant more to me  
than listening to all the  
professional I have spoken  
to.....and all the tablets or  
treatment I'd been  
offered....." *Carer FP*

ights  
out

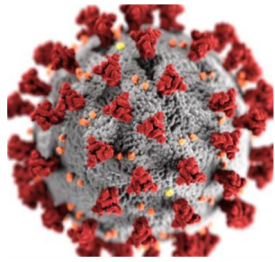
*carer*

# Carers requesting then annual CNE....



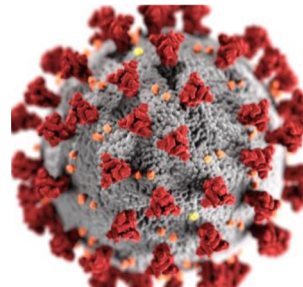
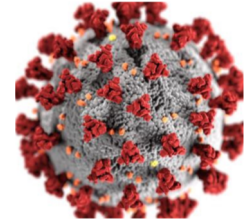
- .... collaboration with the one of the Community Managed Organization and Non Government Organization additional CNE occurred.....





## Then came COVID.....

- face to face no longer possible – risks to all
- event had to become digital platform
- excluded many F&C with no access to newer technologies
- Community Managed Organization and NGO to provide digital platform





# The digital age was forced upon us...

- digital platform has come with its own challenges and delivery.....
- Excluded many carers not used to these technologies
- Technical issues.....





## The hidden carers

In many ways we were already using digital technology.....

- Those carers other than 'Designated Carers' or 'Principal Care Providers';
- May provide direct or indirect support to patient;
- Need support and assistance in their own right;
- Identifying, initiating and providing support needs *thoughtful* communication;
- Provide vital collateral and corroborative information to assist with the patients rehabilitation;

# Evaluations

- From the carers perspective, there is a vital need to continue the CNE;
- May be ongoing issues and challenges to reach carers ...
- Being able to assist and fund some of the carers expenses
- Carers do provide a valuable resource to our patients when they are well supported themselves.