

Media Release

13 October 2017

Letting carers know they count

Did you know that carers save the health system \$1.1 billion every week?

With more than 2.8 million carers in Australia, providing 36 million hours of care and support each week, Australia counts on our carers.

These numbers and more are being recognised with this year's National Carers Week theme, Carers Count.

National Carers Week runs from 15-21 October 2017 and recognises the outstanding contribution carers make to Australia.

Liverpool Hospital is showing carers that they count by turning a once drab lift lobby into a cosy sitting area for carers visiting Liverpool Hospital's Aged Care ward.

The 'Carers Corner' was created to give carers visiting their loved ones in hospital somewhere comfortable to take time out and relax.

Liverpool Hospital Community Participation Coordinator, Janet Harrison, said the idea for the Carers Corner came from one of the members of the Liverpool Hospital Consumer and Community Participation Network.

"One of the Network representatives was in the Aged Care ward for some time and his wife, who was his carer, found there was nowhere comfortable for her to go to take a moment away from sitting by his bedside," she said.

"The lift lobby was really the only place for carers to sit away from the ward and it was a bit drab with chairs that weren't appropriate for older people who may have mobility problems."

A joint working party between hospital staff and Liverpool Community Participation Network was set up and an action plan developed after consultation with our carers about improvements they would like to see to this area.

Soon after staff set to work installing drink vending machines, making sure the area was up-to-date, providing appropriate reading material and flyers for the carers and putting in more mobility-friendly chairs.

"The feedback from the carers has been universally positive," Ms Harrison said.

"In a follow up questionnaire 100 per cent of carers said they found Carers Corner a pleasant place to sit, which was an improvement from just 7 per cent before the changes were made."

The District hospitals will also let carers know they count by holding or participating in activities and events, including

- A carers morning tea put on by the aged care wards in Carers Corner
- A carer appreciation breakfast at Fairfield Hospital
- A carers information sharing event at Liverpool Hospital on Wednesday, 18 October with 17 service providers in attendance