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ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

VISION

To be part of a society that values each individual and provides equal access to appropriate and effective health and community services for all its members.

MISSION

To provide leadership and an independent representative voice on mental health issues for non-government organisations in NSW including, service providers and consumer and carer organisations.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

Good mental health is about the whole person; their psychological, physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

Consumer and carer input is central to the promotion of mental health and the delivery and management of services.

Communities need to provide a range of mental health services designed to meet local needs.

An across-governmental approach to mental health promotion and service delivery is required.

KEY PRIORITIES

Informing, engaging, supporting and educating non-government organisations working for mental health.

Influencing public policy.

Promotion of mental health issues in the community.

MENTAL HEALTH COORDINATING COUNCIL (MHCC)

The Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC) is the peak body for non-government organisations (NGOs) working for mental health throughout New South Wales (NSW). MHCC's membership includes NGOS, both specialist and mainstream, and other bodies interested in mental health.

As the peak body for NSW, MHCC aims to provide leadership and an independent public voice on mental health issues. We facilitate effective linkages between the government, non-government and private sectors acting as the liaison body representing the views of our membership.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP OF MHCC OFFERS:

1. Access to various levels of the sector via feedback to and representation by the MHCC secretariat (see MHCC Representation);
2. Opportunities to participate in public policy development and other MHCC initiatives;
3. Access to all MHCC resource services;
4. Regular sector information via our newsletter, "View From the Peak", FYI Faxes and quarterly mailouts; and
5. Discounts on MHCC educational opportunities such as the MHCC Seminar Series and MHCC forums and conferences.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MHCC is the peak body representing non-government mental health organisations in NSW. We gratefully acknowledge the core funding as well as some specific project grants provided by the NSW Health Department. We remain appreciative of the support of all our member organisations, through their membership fees, their unpaid contributions to our committees and projects and their ongoing commitment to mental health and all people living with a mental illness.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

This is my first report as MHCC Chairperson and I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to review some of the years activities and look a little at the year ahead.

When I first took on the role as chair of MHCC I was concerned about my ability to make a difference or properly participate from up in the Tweed. As it's turned out Tweed is not so far away and I have managed to keep my organization afloat and attend to MHCC business.

MHCC has continued to develop and grow over the last 12 months. The profile of the organization and its member base is strong and increasing avenues for participation in MHCC activities has been created via the working groups which will be further expanded in 2004/05.

The NGO Conference was a great success and is referred to frequently by a diverse range of service providers. The quarterly 'View from the Peak' is excellent as is the website and the regular FYIs. The wide representation provided by MHCC can be seen in the Annual Report and initiatives such as the MHCC and DoCS partnership project on caring for children whose parents have a mental illness and substance abuse problem and the Human Services Quality Framework project are innovative and really target areas of need.

The new 'online' MHCC Mental Health Rights Manual will enable far greater access to the information people need to negotiate their way through the mental health system and make informed decisions. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW in providing funds for this initiative.

Funding for the NGO Development Strategy has now come through which provides a great opportunity to really address some of the issues that beset our sector. The NGO Development Strategy positions will allow MHCC to focus on workforce development, service access issues and development of a strong identity for the sector. The team will work closely with the Ministers Office and the Centre for Mental Health to ensure there is commitment in the right places in the direction of the Strategy.

MHCC Executive Officer, Jenna Bateman, is to be congratulated on the achievements of MHCC. Her dedication and commitment are evident in the work of the Council and she has created a strong basis from which the organization can continue to develop. The MHCC secretariat has developed into a cohesive team and have all contributed their individual skills to produce the high standard of work we have come to expect.

I would like to thank all those who have held positions on the MHCC Board over the last year for their support and commitment to MHCC and myself. More than ever the input from Board members and member groups will be needed to inform the work of the secretariat and I am looking forward to the challenges and successes ahead.



**Leone Crayden Chairperson
Mental Health Co-ordinating Council**

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Time to reflect on what has been a busy and important year for MHCC and for the mental health rehabilitation and recovery sector overall. Perhaps most importantly 2003/04 has seen the concepts of rehabilitation and recovery take a higher profile than has been the case in NSW for many years.

The NSW Legislative Council's Inquiry into Mental Health Services in NSW 2002 has been effective in illustrating the shortfalls in the mental health system and providing a platform for MHCC and member groups to advocate for a balance in the mental health system between the provision of acute care and community based rehabilitation and recovery services.

Whilst the \$241 mill additional mental health funding announced in the May 2004 mini budget has been targeted, in the main, to alleviate some of the most critical gaps in access to acute care, non-acute inpatient care and improvements to forensic services and court liaison programs, emphasis in developing the community based rehabilitation and recovery sector is definitely on the agenda.

The Mental Health Taskforce chaired by Brian Pezzutti and attended by MHCC is currently wrestling with the task of increasing transparency and accountability for mental health dollars. This includes conducting an audit of all Human Service agencies in NSW to better determine how people with mental health problems and disorders are being supported in the community.

The complexity of this task reflects both the diversity of services and the increasingly broad base of the mental health sector itself. Understanding how NSW policies of community inclusion and mainstreaming can demonstrate positive outcomes for mental health consumers and their carers is challenging to say the least. However, the involvement of Human Services CEOs in assessing their departments delivery of mental health service provision is a beginning in broadening responsibility for the delivery of support services.

MHCC membership has diversified to incorporate mainstream organizations keen to increase their capacity in the mental health area. At the same time MHCC has emphasized just how crucial it is that specialist mental health community based services are supported to grow and develop to provide an evidence base for approaches to rehabilitation and recovery essential in informing the practice of non-specialist services as well as other specialist services.

The work of the secretariat in advocating for the sector and raising the mental health banner in numerous forums has been ceaseless. As always the secretariat have had to work in a very flexible environment, reorganizing priorities as need arises. Stephanie Maraz has done an excellent job over the year of compiling 'View from the Peak' in addition to a load of policy and information dissemination work. Ann Maclochlainn has taken on developing many of our policy submissions, workforce issues and does an excellent job of student supervision. Corinne Henderson has been welcomed as a member of staff after originally joining us as a student. Her enthusiasm and dedication in taking on issues arising from our working groups has been tremendous. Edi Condack contributes a huge amount to MHCC. Her determination and resourcefulness are a constant joy to us all. Last but not least are Angela Deligio who rescues us when the work needs to be done 'today!' and Tyson Roche who keeps our computer system in tip top shape.

2004/05 sees MHCC expand by three with the commencement of the NGO Development Strategy. Whilst we will be a little cramped until confirmation on funds to move to larger premises comes through, it will be great to have additional capacity to develop and promote the sector.

I would especially like to take this opportunity to thank all those members who have taken the time to call and update me and other staff on activities and issues arising for them in the sector. This contact is invaluable and allows us to more accurately direct our activities and represent member views in the many forums we attend. Many thanks also to those who gave feedback on MHCC performance and priority setting on the member survey.

Finally I would like to thank the MHCC Board for their ongoing support and guidance, particularly chairperson, Leone Crayden, who has managed to overcome the tyranny of distance to give valued support to the work of the Council.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenna Bateman', is written over a large, light-colored circular scribble.

**Jenna Bateman, Executive Officer
Mental Health Co-ordinating Council**

PEOPLE BEHIND MHCC

MHCC BOARD

Chair:	Leone Crayden, Ontrack Community Programs
Vice Chair:	Phil Nadin, PRA (Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association)
Honorary Treasurer:	Stephen Kinkead, New Horizons
Honorary Secretary:	Douglas Holmes, NSW CAG (NSW Consumer Advisory Group for Mental Health)
Ordinary Member:	Alex Rivers, Schizophrenia Fellowship
Ordinary Member:	Pam Branch, Westworks
Ordinary Member:	George Dibley, CCC Inner City
Ordinary Member:	Tony Humphrey, Club Speranza
Ordinary Member:	Sheila Deaves, CCC Coffs Harbour
Ordinary Member:	Warren Holt, Triple Care Farm

SECRETARIAT

Executive Officer:	Jenna Bateman
Policy Officers:	Ann MacLochlainn (part-time) Stephanie Maraz (part-time)
E-Forum Co-ordinator /Policy Support Officer:	Corinne Henderson (casual) Rodney Angelo (casual) (until 16.10.03)
Office Manager:	Edi Condack (part-time)
Admin Assistant:	Angela Deligio (casual)
Information Technology:	Tyson Roche (casual)

STUDENT PLACEMENTS

• Corinne Henderson

Australian College of Applied Psychology.

Corinne has contributed to the development and coordination of the MHCC working groups formed around the recommendations of the Legislative Council Inquiry into Mental Health Services in NSW. Corinne also contributed to the development and maintenance of the e-forum. Corinne has since joined MHCC as a part time Policy Support Officer.

MHCC REPRESENTATION

National Organisations

- Consumer Health Forum of Australia Governing Body
- Department of Health and Aged Care Suicide Prevention Strategy
- Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA)

State organisations (NSW)

- ACROD Management Committee
- Carers NSW
- Disability Council NSW
- FONGA (Forum of Non-Government Agencies) NCOSS
- Institute of Psychiatry, Consumer Advocate Training Consultative Committee
- Mental Health Association (MHA), Mental Health Promotion Advisory Committee
- NCOSS Health Policy Advisory Group (HPAG)
- Office of the Protective Commissioner Disability Group Interagency Committee
- Quality Management Services (QMS) Human Service Organisation Standards Steering Committee
- Reform Alliance for Mental Health (RAMH)

State Government Departments (NSW)

- Attorney General's Department, Law Reform Commission, Flexible Service Delivery Consultative Committee.
- Corrections Health Service Consumer and Community Council
- Department of Education & Training, Disabilities Community Consultative Committee
- Department of Housing - Belong Housing Advisory Committee
- NSW Community Housing Disability Consultative Committee
- NSW Mental Health Review Systems Committee
- NSW Health Mental Health Taskforce
- NSW Health, Housing, Supported Accommodation Initiative Steering Committee
- NSW Health NGO Advisory Group
- NGO Advisory Group Accreditation Sub-committee
- TAFE – Community Services, Health, Tourism & Hospitality Division, Community Services Industry Reference Group. (Mental Health Course Development)
- The New Joint Guarantee of Service (JGOS)

MHCC PROJECTS 2003 - 2004

e - Forum

The Internet e-Forum (www.mhcc.org.au) was established to facilitate dialogue across the mental health sector in May 2003 and to provide a means through which stakeholders can contribute to and debate the implementation of the recommendations of the Mental Health Inquiry and the Review of the Mental Health Act, as well as any associated issues.

Human Service Standards Quality Framework (HSQF)

Officially launched by the Minister for Health Morris Iemma at the NSW NGO Conference in March 2004 the HSQF has the potential to greatly streamline quality review processes for the growing number of organisations with multiple funding streams. The HSQF is the culmination of an 18 month project, which was initiated by the Mental Health Coordinating Council and funded by the Centre for Mental Health.

The HSQF is the result of a collaborative partnership between the NGO sector peak bodies and service providers and the following government departments: NSW Health, Department of Ageing, Disability and

Home Care (DADHC) and the Department of Community Services (DoCS). Expressions of interest have also been received from other government bodies that are required to accredit service providers against sets of standards or reporting frameworks mapped to the Framework.

The HSO Framework maps the common elements of 15 sets of standards used by the health and community sector. It specifically targets the needs of multi-funded, multi-program NGOs who are required to respond to multiple sets of standards and reporting frameworks across the state and commonwealth arenas.

The HSO Framework was presented to the Human Service CEO meeting on the 1st March 2004 where it gained in-principle endorsement. It has been referred to the Grants Administration Review for consideration as a whole of government framework across funded government NGOs. In the interim government departments who have commenced work in integrating the Framework into their quality monitoring processes, eg, DoCS and DADHC, will continue to progress the Framework at the Departmental level. Work on how the Framework will be used across government departments in terms of measuring the quality and performance of commonly funded NGOs will form part of the anticipated terms of reference for the Grants Administration Review.

Mental Health Rights Manual

The second edition of The Mental Health Rights Manual, a guide to the legal and human rights of people with a mental illness in NSW is completed and due for launch at the MHCC AGM in October 2004. The aim in producing a second edition of this publication is to provide an up to date, accessible and informative manual for people with mental health problems and disorders, their carers and the general public; one that clearly describes the rights of consumers of mental health services and promotes the concept of inclusion within a human rights framework.

The decision was taken to develop this edition as an on-line resource. The advantages of this approach are that in the rapidly changing information and legislative environment an online resource can be easily updated. In addition access is increased with most people able to access the internet from work or home and others having the opportunity to access the internet at local libraries, councils, neighbourhood centres and internet cafes.

The Law Foundation of NSW generously assisted with the funding of the second edition.

National Illicit Drug Strategy MISA Project – Supporting Children in Families Affected by Parental Mental Illness and Substance Abuse Issues

This partnership project between MHCC and the Department of Community Services commenced in October 2003. The project to-date has been informed by an extensive review of the literature and existing programs, as well as consultation with key stakeholders including caseworkers, parents and children and foster carers. Resources for caseworkers, children and foster carers have been produced. A training package for caseworkers and foster carers will be developed and piloted in November 2004. This will include guidelines and practice tools for caseworkers.

A Reference Group has been formed at a local level to inform needs and gaps in MISA service provision. It is proposed that a forum be conducted late in 2004 to explore the issues relevant to cross agency practice in MISA service provision with families in the child protection system. The project will be evaluated during its pilot phase and will form part of a meta-evaluation for NIDS projects managed by the DoCS. A full copy of the project Literature Review and other reference materials can be found at www.mhcc.org.au

Response to Sexual Violence Project (RSVP)

This group is currently meeting under the auspice of MHCC and is focused on exploring issues for women who have experienced sexual violence. Particular focus is given to cross sector partnerships in addressing the needs of women experiencing mental health problems as a result of childhood sexual assault. The group is working on the development of a position paper and planning a forum scheduled for late 2004.

Strategy for the Development of Community Organisations working in Mental Health

This project initially announced by the then NSW Health Minister Craig Knowles to commence in early 2003 has experienced delay due to administrative matters and the change in health minister. The MHCC has now received project funding to implement a 'Strategy for the Development of Community Organisations Working in Mental Health'

Key objectives of the 'Strategy for the Development of Community Organisations Working in Mental Health' are to:

- Increase collaboration and networking between community-based mental health services and Area Health Mental Health Services at the local level
- Work with Area Mental Health Services, community-based mental health services and local communities to identify areas of unmet need including gaps in service delivery and to work together to address these
- Assist community-based mental health services to build capacity to provide quality and effective services

To achieve these objectives, the Strategy will focus its efforts on the following three tasks:

- Promotion of partnerships
- Access and gaps
- Workforce development

Three project workers commenced in August 2004. The project has initially been funded for three years. MHCC Members, the Centre for Mental Health and Area Health Service Directors will be closely consulted on project directions.

MHCC Working Groups

In 2003/2004 a number of Working Groups were established from the MHCC 'Day of Participation and Action' in May 2003, when participants including representatives of public sector agencies, area health services, peak body representatives, consumers, carers, non-government service-providers, and members of the health professions across NSW came together to prioritise the recommendations of The Legislative Council Select Committee Inquiry into Mental Health Services in NSW.

The MHCC Working Groups continue their efforts to expand networks and develop strategies to further successful implementation of the most critical recommendations, as well as advocate and lobby around issues not addressed by the Inquiry. Subsequent to initial consultations and the development of terms of reference, the working groups identified priority issues of concern and support, which were addressed in correspondence to the Premier, the Minister for Health, Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Cherie Burton, other parliamentarians and the Centre for Mental Health.

Since there was a considerable overlapping in various areas, and collaboration was a key issue clearly supported and necessary for addressing the many, varied and interrelated areas which impact upon mental health and related service provision, the original eleven groups have condensed into five.

MHCC is committed to continued development and support of Working Groups in the areas of: Carers, Justice Health, Mental Illness and Substance Use, Housing and Employment. The groups meet on a monthly basis and frequently invite expert guests to inform them on specific issues or to update the groups on the progress of relevant projects such as the new forensic facility at Long Bay. The groups endeavour to keep abreast of all the latest research data, and continually access information from other States and overseas. The groups have also been involved in several consultative processes surrounding collaboration, evidence based practice, education, training and submission development such as the Review of the Mental Health Act 1990.

Work continues due to the dedication of those involved who give so much time to ensure that the voice of those they represent is heard and that their contributions to the debate are taken seriously.

MHCC SUBMISSIONS, CONSULTATIONS and PARTICIPATION

MHCC Submissions of Note

Alcoholic products aimed at young people

MHCC contributed to the review examining guidelines for the marketing of specific alcoholic products that could be seen to be aimed at the youth market. MHCC strongly supports a review of this issue in the light of recent data that identifies a growth in alcohol problems and mental health issues. The establishment of an independent watchdog was recommended to investigate and manage the impact that packaging and promotions might have on young people. Ongoing education programs should be aimed at parents and children, as well as confidential support program for parents, children and independent young people experiencing problems with alcohol abuse.

Attorney General's Department, Review of the Protected Estates Regulation 1995 and the Proposed Protected Estates Regulation 2003

MHCC contributed to the review by providing a written submission. Comments included support for the proposal to change the fee structure so that OPC clients will, in total, pay less than they currently pay. MHCC also supported the removal of the client's principal place of residence from the calculation of total assets for the purpose of assessing ongoing management fees.

Boarding House Licensing Arrangements

MHCC contributed to the Review of the Youth and Community Services Act 1973, in relation to the examination of need for reform in the licensing arrangements associated with the licensing of boarding houses. Recommendations from the Legislative Council's Select Committee Final Report on the Inquiry into Mental Health Services of NSW were drawn upon to highlight the fundamental need for people to be appropriately housed and serviced to maintain good health. As part of the overall review of licensing arrangements, multiple inadequacies impacting upon the viability of licensed boarding houses need to be addressed, such as: the level of funding; staff salary and conditions, training and development; service provision; and legislative protection for boarding house residents with disabilities.

DADHC "Future Directions 2004: A Draft Discussion Document."

MHCC provided a written submission to this review. Concern was expressed at the inadequacy of service provision by DADHC for people with a disability due to mental illness. The needs of older people with long standing mental illness, older people with late onset mental illness and residents of boarding houses were also raised. Recommendation was made that the expert advisory groups proposed by DADHC include a group that advises on mental health issues, and that MHCC be included in that group.

IPART Review

MHCC reviewed this document on NSW Health structure and functions and provided input into the NCOSS submission.

Men & Mental Health

MHCC's submission to the Mental Health Council of Australia supported the review of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) publication, Men & Mental Health -1995. Of most importance is the need for a general update of information which adequately reflects changes that have occurred since publication. MHCC commented on various statements that lacked objectivity or an evidence base and recommended current research be accessed. In particular, facts and figures on suicide rates need to be updated to ensure initiatives for intervention are considered as a matter of urgency. MHCC also recommended a combined holistic approach to men's mental and physical health, requiring attention both in terms of education and health funding.

MHCC Forensic Working Group

MHCC made two submissions to the Minister for Health pointing out that The National Mental Health Plan 2003 – 2008 identified forensic populations as one of the target groups for improved service access and

service responses, and that evaluation and reform of service models was essential. Also raised was the fact that The National Mental Health Strategy acknowledged the forensic population as a group requiring access to the same range of services as the wider community. The submissions also highlighted the long delays in Ministerial approval for transfer or release of forensic patients and advocated for expansion of the Mental Health Court Liaison Program.

MHCC Carers Working Group

MHCC made a submission to the Minister to advocate for improved support services for families and carers of people with a mental illness. It was emphasised that carers could no longer continue to provide an appropriate level of care without more support. There was also a strong emphasis on the right of carers to share information and the need for greater involvement of carers in treatment planning and for service delivery to be more sensitive to the needs of carers.

MHCC Housing Group

MHCC made a submission to the Premier to advocate that funding be allocated to provide support services for people in existing accommodation to target the gap in services for clients with mental health disabilities. MHCC also supported the evaluation and expansion of the Housing Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI).

NSW Legislative Council, General Purpose Standing Committee Inquiry into Complaints Handling in NSW Health.

MHCC provided a written submission that focused predominantly on the Official Visitors Program. MHCC expressed concern that Official Visitors were unable to carry out their functions as thoroughly as is necessary because of insufficient time, training and resources. MHCC also expressed the view that insight and experience in mental health, together with skills and experience in the evaluation of presented information are important criteria in the selection of Official Visitors and should take precedence over narrow selection criteria, such as occupational category.

NSW Summit on Alcohol Abuse

MHCC made a submission to the Alcohol Summit which addressed issues such as 'dual diagnosis' and inadequate communication between mental health and alcohol services, resulting in clients 'falling through the gaps' in the health care system. A co-ordinated and shared case management approach was recommended which can address both areas of need as well as the development of integrated models of care and the implementation of strategies for cross sector training and skilling. MHCC also supported the recommendation made by the 2002 Legislative Inquiry into Mental Health Services, that the NGO sector is the most appropriate setting for the necessary ongoing management of people with a 'dual diagnosis' and highlighted the need for greater funding and resources, as well as organisational support from Area Health Services, to continue to provide and develop innovative and effective programs.

NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues Review of the Inebriates Act 1912

MHCC contributed to this review by participating in a consultation convened by NCOSS and by providing a written submission. Comments included support for the view that alcoholism and drug addiction are health problems rather than criminal offences and identified the need for a comprehensive and integrated network of services.

Office of the Protective Commissioner Review of the Protected Estates Act 1983

MHCC provided a written submission in relation to the review of the Protected Estates Act 1983 and commented on the need for simplification and clarification of some sections of the Act. Also raised was the need for stronger safeguards and the clarification of sections relating to the management of the estate following the death of the protected person.

Productivity Commission

MHCC provided a written submission commenting on the importance of decreasing discrimination against people with disabilities and promoting their rights of participation and acceptance by society. It was recommended that the DDA be retained with amendments to broaden and strengthen the complaints process and that standards be further developed, monitored and enforced.

Review of Health Services Act

MHCC reviewed this document on the Area Health Services and provided input into the NCOSS submission.

Review of Mental Health Act 1990

The Consultation on this submission included a seminar on privacy and confidentiality held by MHCC which raised issues and discussion around the Review of the Mental Health Act. MHCC canvassed a wide range of MHCC members and community and government agencies in developing a submission to the review.

The Carers Working Group auspiced by MHCC developed a submission on the Mental Health Act which differed from the MHCC submission in that it more accurately reflected the group's perspective on access to information for carers and this was forwarded to the Review.

Review of the Draft of the Government-NGO Compact "Working Together for NSW"

MHCC reviewed the draft of the Compact document and prepared feedback for MHCC members and for the Forum of Non Government Associations (FONGA) convened by NCOSS. MHCC expressed concern that the 'Working Together' framework would not be able to forward the position of NGOs and may in fact limit the NGO sector by stifling action or advocacy perceived to be outside of the framework.

South West Sydney Area Health Service (SWSAHS) Community Participation Framework

MHCC provided consultation regarding the SWSAHS Community Participation Framework. MHCC input focussed on the rigidity of the framework and the need for clarity around the role of NGOs within the framework.

Working Credit Program

MHCC provided a written submission to Minister Vanstone regarding the impact of this process on people with mental health problems. MHCC also focused on the problem of late reimbursement for casual/occasional work.

MHCC Consultations of Note

Attorney Generals Department Roundtable Forum

MHCC participated in this forum convened by the Attorney General's Department in order to discuss issues relating to consent and capacity. MHCC represented issues for the mental health sector.

Corrections Health (Justice Health)

MHCC and the Forensic Working Group met with Dr. Richard Matthews, Deputy Director, Strategic Development NSW Health, and Julie Babineau, acting CEO Corrections Health who gave a presentation on the progress and development of the new forensic facility at Long Bay. Discussion was also held surrounding issues that pose serious obstacles for forensic patients in the corrections community. The working group also advocated to be involved in the multi-agency consultative process to be initiated.

Corrections Health Quality Review

MHCC attended this meeting representing community interests. NSW Health Director General Robyn Kruk also attended. MHCC raised the need for community based services to back up the gains made by the Court Diversion Program.

Charles O'Neill House

MHCC met with Howard Hillam, Program Coordinator, St Vincent de Paul Society. Charles O'Neill House provides accommodation and an education and support program for homeless men. Many of their clients have mental health problems and they are very interested in accessing education for their staff and networking with other MHCC member organisations that may have services which would be appropriate for their clients when they have completed the program at Charles O'Neill House.

Coalition of Appropriate Supported Accommodation for People with Disabilities

MHCC attended a meeting to focus on boarding house reform and 'dual diagnosis'. The general consensus was that more emphasis was required by government to progress 'dual diagnosis' issues and services.

Department of Education and Training/ TAFE Product Advisory Committee meeting

MHCC participated in this committee which reviewed materials and made recommendations in relation to eleven courses in the areas of Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs and Community Services.

Disability Council Chair Andrew Buchanan

MHCC had a series of meetings with Andrew Buchanan to discuss opportunities to work with the Disability Council on mental health disability issues.

Department of Housing Antisocial Behaviour Agreement (ABA)

MHCC attended several briefings and consultations on the new 'Acceptable Behaviour' Legislation. This legislation may affect how people with mental illness are able to maintain public housing tenancies. MHCC participated with peak bodies including Shelter NSW and NCOSS in expressing concern and putting forward suggested amendments to the proposed legislation.

Family and Community Services Department (FaCS) and Department of Education and Workplace Relations (DEWR)

MHCC met with FaCS and DEWR regarding the progress of the Personal Support Program (PSP) and Job Network. They were particularly interesting in evaluating the success of those organisations running both PSP and Job Network together.

Family and Carers NGO Scoping Project .Centre for Mental Health

MHCC facilitated a consultation between MHCC, the Carers Working Group and the management consultant facilitating the review of the Caring for Mental Health Program. Several options for NGOs delivering carer support services as part of a sustainable state-wide program were identified and discussions centred on the need for a collaborative partnership model that would avoid duplication of effort.

Mental Health Advocacy / NSW Legal Aid

MHCC and the Forensic Working Group met with Robert Wheeler of Mental Health Advocacy to seek greater clarity around forensic issues and to assist them in addressing the Review of the Mental Health Act. Discussion mainly focused on the Mental Health Review Tribunal recommendations requiring Ministerial approval; CTOs; Section 33 of the Criminal Procedures Act and Section 30 of the Mental Health Act.

Meetings with NSW Health Minister Morris Iemma

MHCC met with the Minister to discuss the role of MHCC and its member organisations. Issues raised included: access to community services, the revolving door, linkages between acute care and rehabilitation and recovery services in the community, the commitment of non-government services to the principles of recovery and the range of factors which impact on wellness including occupation, physical health, leisure and social connections and housing. The value of providing rehabilitation and support where the person lives was emphasised.

Meetings with Ms Cherie Burton, MP

MHCC Board members met with Ms Cherie Burton, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Helen Nezeritis, Mental Health Advisor to the Minister. Ms Burton was appointed to develop the Government's response to the NSW Legislative Council's Mental Health Inquiry into Mental Health Services. Ms Burton expressed interest in the ongoing input of MHCC and the non-government sector in forming the Government's approach.

Meeting with NSW Health Minister Advisor

MHCC met with Helen Nezeritis, Advisor to Health Minister, to discuss MHCC priorities. Issues to do with service access, discharge planning, rehabilitation and disability support, quality and workforce were covered as was the need for NGO promotion.

Medicines and Industry Workshop

MHCC participated in this workshop organised by the Consumer Health Forum of Australia to inform and consult on provision of information on medicines and clarify pathways for consumer feedback on the use and side effects of medicines.

Myree Harris Churchill Fellowship

MHCC met with Myree Harris to discuss the findings of Churchill Fellowship on Mental Illness and Substance Abuse (MISA) and the development of an MHCC NGO MISA forum in partnership with peak bodies and education and training organisations.

National Prescribing Forum/Workshop

MHCC participated in this forum, which addressed 'Community Quality Use of Medicine'. Stakeholders are carrying out training / workshops in the community with a focus on seniors. No specific attention has been planned for people with mental illness. It is hoped that increasing community awareness generally will lead to a trickle down effect to other sections of the community.

NCOSS Roundtable Consultation on the Review of the Inebriates Act

MHCC participated in this consultation in relation to the NSW Legislative Council's Review of the Inebriates Act 1912. MHCC focussed on the needs of, and service provision for, people with mental illness and substance abuse.

NCOSS Consultation Review of Advertising/ Packaging of Alcoholic Beverages

MHCC participated in a consultation that looked at the impact of marketing and packaging of alcoholic beverages on young people. The group discussed the existing guidelines, the research available and the recommendations from the Summit on Alcohol Abuse.

NADA Consultation

MHCC met with the Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (NADA) to discuss issues arising from the MISA Action Group and the difficulty of the related recommendations within the Mental Health Inquiry to move the issue forward. Discussion focused on strategies to develop a way of working together on the issue. A Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed between MHCC and NADA.

NSW Health NGO Advisory Group (NGOAG) Review

MHCC participated in the meeting which addressed the role and function of the group and the need for it to continue under the recent restrictions placed on NSW Health regarding the number of committee meetings held within the department and the outcomes from these committees. It was agreed that the meeting was highly important and would continue but with a tighter mechanism for producing and tracking outcomes.

Pre-Budget campaign.

MHCC met with NCOSS to discuss priority areas for the pre-budget media campaign. Areas agreed as priorities were: the right to treatment; forensic/court diversion; readmission rates; supported accommodation; vocational programs; and carers. A series of joint media releases were produced.

NCOSS Pre-Budget Consultation Day

MHCC participated in this Consultation Day convened by NCOSS at the Masonic Centre. Input was provided on issues, problems and priorities in the sector; budget priorities and fiscal strategy; and sector viability issues. Workshops were held to identify priorities in the following areas: Disability; Health; Housing/Homelessness; Domestic Violence/Women; Early Intervention; Older people; Law and Justice; Education; Transport; Indigenous Issues; CALD Issues

Office of the Protective Commissioner (OPC) Disability Groups Inter-Agency Committee

MHCC participated in meetings of this committee. The Protective Commissioner is an independent public official who is legally appointed to protect and administer the financial affairs and property of people who are unable to make financial decisions. The function of the committee is to provide and receive information, consultancy and feedback on a range of issues of relevance to the mental health and disability sectors.

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)

MHCC was consulted on the impact of changes relating to pharmaceutical information provision to people with mental health problems and disorders. The impact of the real cost of drugs as opposed to the PBS price included on pharmaceutical labels and responsibility for informing consumers of contra indications were highlighted.

Privacy NSW - Consultation on Privacy Statutory Guidelines

MHCC participated in this Consultation convened by Privacy NSW to review the draft statutory guidelines on the Management of Health Services, Training, Research and the Collection of Information from a Third Party. The highly contentious nature of privacy was acknowledged in trying to find a balance between client confidentiality and the value of transferring information for the benefit of that client.

Reform Alliance for Mental Health (RAMH)

A meeting was held with Minister Iemma attended by MHCC and a delegation of representatives under the RAMH banner (Reform Alliance for Mental Health) comprising NGO, consumer and carer representation plus representation from the clinical disciplines (psychiatry, nursing, psychology, social work, occupational therapy). The group presented their shared perspective that the NSW Mental Health System will increasingly fail to meet need if recognition and value is not placed on access to care, rehabilitation and support in the community. The message that acute medical care is only half of what is required in a balanced mental health system was presented to the Minister as was the need to more clearly define what services people need access to and where responsibility for resourcing lies.

TAFE NSW

MHCC participated in consultations with TAFE regarding the development of courses with mental health content. The consultations were aimed at ensuring that the courses being developed met the needs of NGO workers and organisations. Issues such as alcohol and other drugs, rural and remote issues and community services were included. This work is ongoing.

Welfare Rights Centre

MHCC attended a meeting regarding the Working Credits Program. Input was given by MHCC relating to difficulties that people with mental illness could have in complying with all the requirements of the program.

MHCC Presentations of Note

Case Management Workshop, NCOSS Mental Health Conference "Working Together for Mental Health – Cross Government and Cross Sector Approaches"

MHCC facilitated this informative Workshop on Case Management. The presenters were Professor Beverley Raphael, Centre for Mental Health and Leone Crayden, MHCC Chair and Manager, Tweed Valley River Fellowship. The focus was on improving case management services and the provision of seamless service delivery.

Centre for Drug and Alcohol Case Management Sub-committee.

MHCC presented on NGO case management models in mental health. The Centre for Mental Health presented from a mental health teams perspective. This committee is exploring models of case management to roll out funds allocated under the drug summit for case management primarily for clients on methadone.

Forum of Non-Government Associations (FONGA) meetings at NCOSS.

MHCC presented the Human Services Quality Framework Project (HSQF) at this meeting to inform the wider sector of the implications of this project. MHCC also gave a presentation to FONGA related to the housing and support needs of people with mental illness. FONGA is a sector- wide forum, which provides information, consultation and feedback on a range of issues of relevance to the non-government sector.

HACC Services Reviews

MHCC conducted a number of the HACC service reviews undertaken by Quality Management Services (QMS). The aim of MHCC participation is to gain a better understanding of how these services are working with people who have mental health problems and disorders and how access can be improved.

Hunter Council of Social Services (HCOSS)

MHCC Presented to this forum on the findings of the Mental Health Inquiry Report and the work being done by MHCC to promote implementation of the recommendations supported by member groups.

Institute of Psychiatry Consumer Advocates Course

MHCC presented several sessions on the Mental Health System, Mental Health Policy and the Mental Health Act and other legislation relevant to consumers such as privacy, disability and tenancy.

MHCC Strategic Planning Day

MHCC held a strategic planning day during which MHCC board members and secretariat met to discuss priorities and issues of relevance to MHCC and its role and function. MHCC membership will be provided opportunity to input into the MHCC 2005 -2008 Strategic Plan.

NSW 'International Day for People with DisAbility' – 'Connecting Communities 2003'

Along with the Disability Council of NSW and other peak disability advocacy groups and the Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care, MHCC participated in the organisation and presentation of a day of celebration to mark the contribution people with disabilities make to the communities they live in. The festival offered a wide range of entertainment and information.

Presentation at Productivity Commission Hearing

MHCC presented at this hearing conducted by the Productivity Commission into the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Janet Meagher from the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (PRA) represented MHCC along with MHCC Secretariat representation.

Presentation/Facilitation of Northern beaches Consumer Conference

MHCC presented on the Mental Health Inquiry recommendations and facilitated a workshop prioritising consumer recommendations

Privacy NSW Stakeholder Consultation: Draft Guidelines under the PPIP Act on Consent and Capacity

MHCC took part in the Stakeholder Consultation process to discuss issues raised in the Draft Guidelines on Consent and Capacity under the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act (PPIPAct) and highlighted a range of issues drawn from the recommendations of the Mental Health Inquiry. Some of the points included: avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy that can result in the withholding of important information from the carer; a need for simplification of information to ensure general access; a flexible approach to decision making, joint assessment and service delivery; awareness of cultural impact issues; and improved communication & information sharing

Questions in Parliament

MHCC liaised with the Greens and Sylvia Hale, Greens Senator, in relation to Senator Hale asking a series of questions in parliament prior to the budget being handed down. MHCC has also been in contact with Clover Moore's office in relation to provision of advice on question content.

TAFE Community Service Head Teachers and Coordinators

MHCC gave a presentation to the Head Teachers and Coordinators regarding MHCC and its activities and the needs of mental health workers for training in the area of Alcohol and Other Drugs. MHCC also had discussions with the group regarding ongoing collaboration between MHCC and TAFE in the development of education to meet the needs of NGO workers and organisations.

MHCC Participation of Note

NSW Mental Health Task Force

MHCC was asked to provide representation to participate in this taskforce set up to oversee implementation of the Government's response to the Mental Health Inquiry. The taskforce is chaired by Dr Brian Pezzutti. Areas addressed by the Taskforce include: the capital works program and allocation of the 400 new beds; financial reporting systems for area health services; linkage between the Human Services CEOs group, Cabinet and the Taskforce; audit of mental health spending in all human service departments; mental health workforce issues; Justice Health Services; provision of rehabilitation and disability support.

Forging the Future Forum

MHCC attended the NCOSS forum which focused on a range of progressive issues including: building relations between Government and the NGO sector, collaboration in planning for human services, new funding regimes and workforce planning.

Gaining Ground Steering Committee

MHCC attended the strategic planning meeting of this committee as the committee is relevant to the aims and objectives of MHCC's project on the National Illicit Drug Strategy Mental Illness and Substance Abuse – Supporting Children in Families Affected by Parental Mental Illness and Substance Abuse Issues.

Human Services CEO Coordinator Meeting.

MHCC and Government Department representatives from the Centre for Mental Health, DADHC and DoCS, and QMS as consultants on the Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) Steering Committee met with Melissa Gibson to discuss how to progress the HSQF through the Human Service CEOs and the Grants Administration Review process. Advice given was to develop a business plan to promote the HSQF to these groups.

Joint Guarantee of Service (JGOS)

MHCC was asked to join the new JGOS advisory group. Under the new Joint Guarantee of Service (JGOS), Aboriginal Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI), non-government organisations (NGOs), Community Housing and Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) services have been included. Discussion was held on how best to promote the new JGOS. Information packages and workshops have been planned around the state. With additional agencies joining, the importance of having a single driving agency was discussed. The committee also discussed ways of achieving commitment from new partners, including mental health NGOs, Aboriginal Services and Community Housing.

Law Society of NSW Symposium on Mental Illness and the Criminal Justice System.

MHCC attended this symposium at which a panel of speakers included Richard Mathews (CEO Corrections Health), Robert Wheeler (Mental Health Advocacy Service), David Greenberg (Corrections Health), and Duncan Chapel (Mental Health Review Tribunal)

Mental Health Week Launch

MHCC attended the launch and award ceremony.

NCOSS Health Peaks

MHCC participated in this meeting held to review the role and function of the NGO Advisory Group and to identify possible ways forward for Health peaks and other groups.

Community Care Awareness Campaign Committee.

MHCC participated in this committee planning a Federal pre-election campaign focusing on the inadequacy of resources in the community care sector.

'Outspoken'

MHCC participated in this forum of consumers concerned, amongst other issues, about advocacy for the consumer voice and a return to institutionalisation as evidenced by the re-opening of non-acute inpatient beds across the state.

Women and Mental Health Conference on Sexual Violence

MHCC attended this conference aimed at raising awareness of sexual violence experienced by women with mental illness in addition to the impacts of sexual violence on the mental health of women. The experience of refugees and women from war zones was highlighted.

MHCC SEMINARS/FORUMS

Consumer Consultative Committee (CCC) Forum

MHCC held a forum to discuss proposed changes to consumer, carer and community participation and provided an opportunity to identify and discuss a variety of models and pathways for participation.

NSW NGO Conference 'Turning the Tide'

The 2nd biannual NSW NGO Conference 'Turning the Tide' Mental Health, NGOs and the Community was held on 25 – 26 March 2004 at Novotel Northbeach Wollongong. The Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC), Illawarra Area Health Service and NSW Health (Centre for Mental Health) together facilitated the conference designed to review opportunities for both mental health and mainstream non-government organisations (NGOs) and to promote stronger relationships between NGOs and government agencies and services.

With almost 400 registrations and 80 presentations, the event was a strong show of the passion people have for this area of endeavour. A broad range and depth of issues were covered and acknowledged as important in the recovery process. These included spiritual, sexual, social justice and community development perspectives. The Hon. Morris Iemma, Minister for Health officially opened the conference and congratulated the NGO sector on their work with the mental health community. A broad range of keynote speakers covered topics such as population approaches to mental health, the way forward for NGOs, changes to the Mental Health Act and the Grants Administration Review. Group assemblies addressed youth issues, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI) and Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) issues.

Skill Development for Mental Health NGOs

MHCC organised a day of training on 21 November 2003 for member organisations to strengthen knowledge and skills on issues of duty of care, confidentiality and the role of the carer in relation to the proposed review of the Mental Health Act. Guidance was given on advocacy and lobbying skills, as well as submission writing, social enterprise and sources of funding. Speakers included representatives from the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC), the NSW Guardianship Tribunal and the Social Entrepreneurs Network (SEN).

MHCC NEWSLETTER

A broad range of issues were covered in the four editions of View from the Peak published during the year with some of the key topics as follows. All articles can be viewed on the MHCC website.

Spring 2003

The third National Mental Health Plan; MHCC e-forum; Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI); Forum on the future of CCCs; Black Dog Institute news; Charitable status under threat; Planting the seed for partnerships with business; Alcohol Summit; Disability employment reforms consultation; Update on the disability support pension.

Summer 2003/4

Review of the NSW Mental Health Act – a window of opportunity; One year after the Inquiry into mental health services in NSW; Protecting the privacy of people with a decision-making disability; Review of workers compensation report; Pro bono services; Update on the future of the Active Linking Initiative (ALI).

Autumn 2004

NGO Conference helps 'Turn the Tide'; Improving support for children from families with MISA issues; Balancing the responsibilities of confidentiality and privacy; Caring for carers mental health projects; Improved forensic mental health services; Indigenous mental health service delivery.

Winter 2004

Disability support pension under pressure; Public housing tenants lose basic rights; Legal standards long overdue for boarding houses; Caring for carers; CARE Employment unsupported by local council; Disclosure of psychiatric disability in the workplace; Eastern area interagency push for action; Alcohol Summit outcomes; Helping people with a mental illness quit smoking.

MHCC MEMBER SURVEY 2004

Thank you to the MHCC members who found the time to fill in our 2004 Member Survey. The information you provide us with not only helps to inform what the MHCC Secretariat needs to focus on in the future but whether or not we're doing a good job doing what we're doing! The following is a summary of what our members had to say about MHCC services.

The benefits of MHCC membership

The majority of our respondents rated the information provided to them by MHCC to be very beneficial. This information included the contents of the popular FYI Faxes (tender information, seminars, job advertisements and the like) and our quarterly newsletter View from the Peak. Members were interested in being informed on a wide range of topics with News in Brief and State and Federal Policy being of most importance. Other suggestions for the newsletter including: current research, strategies for reducing stigma and supported employment.

Members also rated well the systemic advocacy and representation of member organisations at government level provided by MHCC. Whilst preferences were varied, members generally supported MHCC's policy direction including committees currently attended at national and state organisations and departments. Involvement with major projects and the focus of submissions and press releases was also broadly supported

Keeping you informed

Members continue to be interested in the Educational Seminars held each year with suggestions for future topics including: psychosocial rehabilitation; alternative treatments; forensic mental health; consumer participation; finding employment for people with a mental illness; risk management; advocacy for carers. A high level of interest was also shown by members in participating in a forum to identify NGO training needs in mental health.

Respondents nominated funding, advocacy, employment and housing reform as key areas they would like MHCC to focus on. Other issues mentioned included; forensic mental health, dual disability, connecting with other NGOs, risk management, consumer participation and CCCs development

Internet

Most respondents indicated that they were aware of the regularly updated MHCC website and were accessing information on a range of issues with some regularity and ease. Requests for other information included: current mental health initiatives, policies and funding opportunities, medication and side-effects and partnership building. Many respondents were also accessing the MHCC e-forum although participation continues to be sporadic, largely due to time constraints. The suggestion of extending the e-forum for other discussion was encouraged by most respondents, with suggestions including: consumer advocacy and participation, barriers to recovery and general concerns.

MHCC MEMBERS 2003 - 2004

Action Foundation for Mental Health Inc
Active Employment
Active Employment - Gosford
Active Employment - Penrith
Active Employment - Springwood
Aftercare
AIDS Council of New South Wales Inc
Alcohol & Drug Foundation of NSW
Alcohol & Drug Foundation of NSW - Stanmore
Alice's Cottages
Alliance to Improve Mental Health Service (Inc)
Anxiety Disorders Alliance (ADA)
ARAFMI (Newcastle)
ARAFMI Central Coast
ARAFMI Illawarra
ARAFMI NSW
ARAFMI Wingecarribee
Auburn Cottage Inc
Australian Mental Health Suicide Consumer Alliance
B Miles Women's Housing Scheme
Banks House Support Group
Baptist Community Services
Bay Ami Accommodation Inc
Billabong Clubhouse
Black Dog Institute
Blue Mountains Food Services
Carers NSW
Castle Personnel Services Inc
CCC Armidale
CCC Bankstown
CCC Campbelltown
CCC Central Sydney
CCC Coffs Harbour
CCC Inner City
CCC Liverpool/Fairfield
CCC Macleay
CCC Mental Health Consumer Advocacy - Taree
CCC Mid North Coast Partnership Committees
MHCC MEMBERS 2003 – 2004 (cont)
CCC Mid Western Area Health Service
CCC Mudgee
CCC Northern Beaches
CCC Northern Sydney Area Mental Health
CCC Port Macquarie Base Hospital
CCC South Eastern
CCC St George
CCC Tamworth
CCC Tenterfield
CCC Tweed Valley
CCC Wingecarribee
Centacare
Centacare Ageing & Disability Services
Charmian Clift Cottages
CHESS
City Women's Hostel
Clarence Valley Community Programs
Club Speranza
CO AS IT
Compeer Illawarra
Compeer Program
Counselling & Retraining For Employment
Disability Advocacy Network
Dona Maria Pre and Postnatal Support Network
Dympna House
Fair GO Health Forum
GROW North Coast Community Centre
GROW NSW
Hope Unlimited Group
Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Association Action for MH Inc.
Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Lifeline & Community Aid Inc
Hunter Joblink Inc
Illawarra Mental Health Service
Independent Community Living Association
Interchange Respite Care (NSW) Inc
JewishCare
Kaiyu Clubhouse
Life Without Barriers
Lifeline Newcastle/Hunter
Lifeline South Coast (NSW)
Lifeline Sydney
Lifeline Western Sydney
Macarthur Disability Services
Mental Health Association NSW Inc
Mental Health Issues Group - St Vincent de Paul
Mental Health Reconnect
Mental Illness Education Aust (NSW) Inc (MIEA)
MHARS Mental Health Accommodation
Rehabilitation Services
Mid North Coast Living Skills/Rehabilitation Forum
Mid North Coast Mental Health - Southern
Mid Western CAG Inc
Mind Matters Media Inc
Moomba Accommodation Services
Mountains Community Resource Network

Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW (MDAA)	Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (PRA)
National Association for Loss & Grief (NSW) Inc	Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (PRA)
Neami Illawarra	Richmond Fellowship of NSW
Neami Inc	Richmond Fellowship of NSW (Hunter)
Neami South East Sydney	Richmond Fellowship Of NSW (Wentworth)
New Horizons Enterprises	Richmond Fellowship Of NSW(Central Sydney)
Newtown Neighbourhood Centre - Boarding House Project	Schizophrenia Fellowship
Northern Beaches Mental Health Support Group	Soma Health Association
Northern Sydney Health (NSH) Mental Health Consumer Network	Southern Community Welfare Inc
Northern Sydney Health Area Mental Health	St Vincent's Mental Health Service
NSW Consumer Advisory Group	Stepping Out Housing Program
NSW Rape Crisis Centre	Suicide Prevention Australia Inc
NSW Users & AIDS Association	Sydney Counselling Centre
On Track Community Programs	Tenterfield Fellowship Support Group
Open Employment	The Salvation Army
Parramatta Mission	The Station Ltd
Peer Support Foundation Limited	Transcultural Mental Health Centre
Personnel Employment Albury Wodonga Inc	Triple Care Farm - Mission Australia
Physical Disability Council Of NSW	Uniting Care Naree'en Gardens
Progressive Employment Personnel	Western Riverina Community Care
Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association	Westworks Inc
	Wollondilly Camden Family Support Service Inc
	Women & Mental Health
	Woodville Community Services Inc

NEW MEMBERS 2003 - 2004

Action Foundation for Mental Health Inc	Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association - Newcastle
Alcohol & Drug Foundation	Richmond Fellowship -Wentworth
Alcohol & Drug FoundationAuburn Cottage	Richmond Fellowship – Central Sydney
Black Dog Institute	St Vincent's Mental Health Service
Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association - Wollongong	Tenterfield Fellowship Support Group