



Mental Health  
Co-ordinating Council

**Annual Report**  
**2002-2003**



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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

It is with great pleasure that I commend you to the 21st Annual Report. Our commitment to providing strong leadership for our public and the people of NSW has remained firm throughout the past year and this is evidenced by the content of this report.

"Time is a great equaliser" we constantly hear when talking in terms of what can be achieved in a day, week, month or year. In these days of fewer resources, each of us has to ensure that we get the most out of the time allotted to the tasks we set ourselves. Services have had to find creative ways to use resources and it is encouraging to find innovation still alive and well within our member groups.

At the Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC) time has challenged our concept of value and priority during the year and forced us to take immediate action once decisions were made. The result has been extremely challenging and I have to report that this action has not, regretfully, resulted in a huge influx of funds to the sector.

The NSW Legislative Council's "Inquiry into Mental Health Services in NSW" presented a system that is failing to meet the needs of the population. The NSW Government is yet to respond to the Recommendations of the Inquiry and we look forward with anticipation to a response being tabled before the year-end and an increase in the funding base.

The MHCC response has focused on the need for an across government approach to service planning and delivery. This need is reflected through the wide range of funding sources and services provided by our member groups. Flowing from this over-arching focus is the need for increased services across all government departments to support the identified population.

On the National stage NSW still shamefully lags behind all other states in its allocation of funds to mental health services. The Mental Health Council of Australia's (MHCA) Report "Out of Hospital Out of Mind" released this year highlights deficits of service and makes a number of recommendations for reform.

In August 2003 members of the MHCA participated in the Australian Health Care Summit to talk about ways to improve Australia's health system. All Health Ministers recently endorsed the National Mental Health Plan 2003-2008 and we are looking forward to its distribution.

Many services are pivotal to the provision of quality care to ensure the health and wellbeing of the population. People who seek help and the people who are close to them must not be forced into a crisis system of care where the end result is police transportation, hospitalisation or prison confinement.

It will become evident as you read this report that MHCC has achieved much throughout the year. Jenna Bateman and the team at MHCC deserve recognition for the high standard of work they have presented. Without their varied skills and commitment to the needs of the member groups many National and State policies would not include such a strong focus on the need for improved mental health services and the recovery model.

Members of the Board of the Council are to be thanked for their strong contribution throughout the year. It is only with the goodwill of the Boards of each organization of MHCC that our Board membership is possible.

Finally, we thank the NSW Department of Health for the continued support of the MHCC.



**Joy Said, AM Chairperson  
Mental Health Co-ordinating Council**

## EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

I've come to enjoy the process of pulling together the MHCC Annual Report. It's a time to take a rare moment to reflect on what we have achieved rather than looking forward to what still needs to be done.

Whilst its true to say that the NSW State election and the release of the NSW Legislative Council's Inquiry into Mental Health created a focus for much of the secretariat's work over 2002/2003, members will see from the contents of the Annual Report that we have represented member interests on a very wide range of issues and initiatives. MHCC members are not always aware of the activities undertaken by the MHCC Board and secretariat and the Annual Report is a great way to demonstrate the scope of what we do.

One of the great challenges for MHCC is deciding how to employ our resources to best meet the interests of members. We had hoped after the former NSW Health Minister Craig Knowles agreed to fund the MHCC NGO Development positions at last years 20th Anniversary celebrations that we would have an increased capacity to assist members and NGO development generally in more direct ways at the local level. However, the \$400,000 in promised funds has not yet been released. MHCC has been assured that there continues to be support for the proposal both from the current Health Minister Morris Iemma and from the Centre for Mental Health. Reasons given for the delay range from some reworking of the NGO quality development component of the proposal to the need to understand the project within the across government review of NGOs currently underway. We continue to be assured by the Minister's Office that the proposal will be funded.

The pathway for NGOs isn't always smooth and generally speaking the environment for NGOs working in mental health over the last year has been extremely variable. Some member organisations have thrived over the year having taken on new projects and opportunities and gained greater confidence in their ability and credibility to attract funds from a wider range of sources than ever before. For others, however the experience of having to face the reality of the insecurity of NGO funding despite evidence of good outcomes has been harsh.

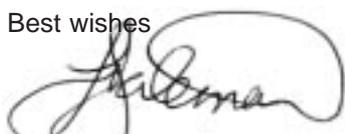
Some of the challenges facing MHCC member groups over the coming year include obtaining greater clarity around funding streams for psychiatric disability support and psychosocial rehabilitation, assessing the continuing impact of competitive tendering on the cohesiveness of the sector, and the challenging and increasingly challenged role of NGOs in systems advocacy and community participation.

MHCC membership has grown over the year with again many of the new members coming from non-specialist mental health organisations. Our sector is diversifying rapidly as mainstream organisations and agencies recognise the importance of addressing the mental health needs of their clients.

In all that we have achieved this year I would like to thank the MHCC Board and particularly Chairperson Joy Said AM whose commitment and experience is very much appreciated. I would also like to thank the MHCC secretariat, Edi Condack, Ann Machlochlainn and Stephanie Maraz for their dedicated and flexible approach to the demands of the job. We were fortunate to have had access to the skills of Cate Thill for a few months over Christmas and later Rodney Angelo in developing and managing the Mental Health Inquiry e-forum and other aspects of promotion and consultation around the Mental Health Inquiry. Also appreciated is the computer support provided to us by Simon Biber and admin assistance of Angela Deligio who frequently make time to assist with very little notice. Sadly this year Fiona Braidwood left us to further her studies but I would like to thank her, among other things, for making the MHCC Library a thing to be proud of.

Finally I would like to thank all the MHCC members who have taken the time to input into MHCC consultations or put thoughts into words on the e-forum or taken the time to ring us with their experiences. This input is very much appreciated and enables MHCC to better represent the needs of the sector.

Best wishes



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

## PEOPLE BEHIND MHCC

### MHCC BOARD

Chair:	Joy Said, Aftercare
Vice Chair:	Phil Nadin, PRA (Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association)
Honorary Treasurer:	Stephen Kinhead, New Horizons
Honorary Secretary:	Douglas Holmes, NSW CAG (NSW Consumer Advisory Group for Mental Health)
Ordinary Member:	Leone Crayden, Tweed River Valley Fellowship
Ordinary Member:	Gary Banks, Sydney Counselling Service
Ordinary Member:	Elizabeth Ingram, CCC Port Macquarie Hospital
Ordinary Member:	Tony Humphries, 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) Cate Thill (3 month contract completed 7.3.03)
NGO Development Officer:	Fabiola Mougios (resigned 7.4.03)
E-Forum Co-ordinator:	Rodney Angelo (casual)
Office Manager:	Edi Condack (part-time)
Admin Assistant:	Fiona Braidwood (resigned 12.3.02) Angela Deligio (casual)
Information Technology:	Simon Biber (casual)

### STUDENT PLACEMENTS

#### • Amy do-Canto

Sydney Uni Social Work Student developed an article for VFP on the range of psychological interventions employed in NGOs for people with mental health problems as part of a psychosocial approach to rehabilitation

#### • Julie Bannerman

Fourth Year Bachelor of Social Work, University of Sydney, contributed to MHCC information gathering process on Outcome Measurement.

#### • Lynda Duncan

Fourth Year Bachelor of Social Work, University of Sydney, contributed to MHCC information gathering processes on service provision for, and treatment and care of, people with a dual diagnosis of mental illness and drug and/or alcohol abuse.

## MHCC SUB-COMMITTEES

### ACCOMMODATION SUB-COMMITTEE

The Accommodation Sub-Committee were consulted around the issues of: the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP); the Supported Accommodation section of the Moving Forward CD-ROM being developed by the Hunter Institute of Mental Health on behalf of the Centre for Mental Health; rehabilitation; access to clinical services; service models; and the MHCC State Election Campaign issues.

Sacha Maller, PRA  
Bill Davies, ICLA  
Pam Branch, Westworks  
Steve Mutton, Moomba Accommodation  
Joy Said, Aftercare  
Vanessa Vaughan, New Horizons

Coral Greig, Alice's Cottages  
Jacqui Connor, Northern Rivers Fellowship  
David Smith, Ballina Community Network  
Fred Kong, Richmond Valley Fellowship  
Bruce Griffiths, Bay Ami  
Danny Gibson, The Station  
Mary-Lou Bingham, Centacare  
Jane Bullen, Stepping Out Housing Program  
Elizabeth Orr, Baptist Community Services  
Helen Petanga, Newtown Neighbourhood Centre  
Leanne Elsworthy, B. Miles Women's Housing  
Marg Barnes, Clarence Valley Community Programs  
Leone Crayden, Tweed River Valley Fellowship  
Mary Waterford and Noel Hiffernan, Mountains Community Resource Network

### **CONSUMERS & CARERS SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Consumer and Carer Sub-Committee were consulted around the issues of: insurance discrimination; the Flexible Service Delivery Project; and the MHCC State Election Campaign issues.

Laraine Toms, NSW CAG  
Janet Meagher, PRA  
Peter Shaecken, Central Sydney CCC  
Leonie Manns, DMDA  
Helen Blum, NSW CAG  
Paula Hanlon, MHANSW  
Joan Hughes, Carers NSW  
Peter Hutten, ARAFMI Illawarra  
Barbara Balog, ARAFMI Wingecarribee

### **EMPLOYMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Employment Sub-Committee were consulted around the issues of: the proposed changes to the Disability Support Pension (DSP); the Personal Support Program (PSP); the Department of Family and Community Services case-base funding trial evaluation; breaching of pension requirements monitored by Centrelink; changes to the SACS Award; and the MHCC State Election Campaign issues.

Pam Branch, Westworks  
John Mandile, CHESS  
Jane Randall, STEPS  
Lynne Fleming/Daryn Pulton, PEP Hornsby  
Sally Wilson, Billabong Clubhouse  
Vince Cooney, Hunter Joblink  
Judi Matthews, New Horizons  
Cliff Hawkey, Tweed River Valley Fellowship  
Stephen Wright, Pioneer Clubhouse  
Judy Panter, ReEmploy  
Christine Lewis, Castle Personnel  
Judy Harrison, Coffs Harbour Living Skills  
Lawrie Hallinan, Lake Macquarie Clubhouse  
Jill Searle, Castle Personnel  
Judy O'Mara and Kath Thurgood, Active Employment  
Alex Kerin and Annie Hibbert, Personnel Employment Albury Wodonga  
Mary Waterford and Noel Hiffernan, Mountains Community Resource Network  
Gary Cook, Mid North Coast Living Skills/Rehabilitation Forum

### **MENTAL HEALTH INQUIRY ACTION GROUPS**

MHCC consultations with members have been focused around the Mental Health Inquiry Action Groups in the latter half of the year.

## **MHCC REPRESENTATION**

### **National Organisations**

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

### **State organisations (NSW)**

- ACROD Management Committee
- Carers NSW
- Disability Council NSW
- FONGA (Forum of Non-Government Agencies) NCOSS
- Health Care Complaints Commission Consumer Advisory Committee
- Hospital Discharge Framework Committee (NCOSS / Dept Health)
- Institute of Psychiatry, Consumer Advocate Training Consultative Committee
- Mental Health Association, Mental Health Promotion Advisory Committee
- NCOSS Health Policy Advice Group (HPAG)
- NGO Advisory Group sector meeting. (MHCC, ACON, NCOSS, NADA, NAAH )
- Office of the Protective Commissioner Disability Group
- Quality Management Services (QMS) Human Service Organisation Standards Steering Committee

### **State Government Departments (NSW)**

- Corrections Health Service Consumer and Community Council
- Department of Education and Training, Disabilities Community Consultative Committee
- Gaining Ground Steering Committee (South West Sydney Area Health Service)
- TAFE – Community Services, Health, Tourism and Hospitality Division, Community Services Work, Industry Reference Group
- Attorney General's Department, Law Reform Commission, Flexible Service Delivery Consultative Committee.
- NSW Health Mental Health Implementation Group
- NSW Health, Housing and Supported Accommodation Initiative Steering Committee
- NSW Health NGO Advisory Group
- NGO Advisory Group Accreditation Sub-committee
- NSW Disability Action Alliance (NDAA)

## **MHCC PROJECTS 2002 - 2003**

### **NGO Development Officers Project**

MHCC developed a proposal aimed at working within Area Health Services to develop and promote the work of NGOs. The then NSW Minister for Health Craig Knowles announced \$400,000 funding for the project to commence in January 2003. The project has since then undergone some redesign in partnership with the Centre for Mental Health and continues to await sign off by the current NSW Health Minister.

### **MHCC Position Paper**

#### **Mental Illness and the Criminal Justice System**

MHCC commissioned Susan Henderson to research this paper which in addition to a review of contemporary theories and programs for court process and prison reform, aims to provide an appraisal of the key factors that not only prevent people with a mental illness entering the criminal justice system in the first place, but also prevent recidivism and recurring illness of those who have left it.

*The paper was launched by Professor Greenberg Director of Corrections Health at the MHCC Day of Participation and Action in May 2003.*

### **Human Services Quality Framework Project**

MHCC developed a proposal to address the increasingly complex process of quality review experienced by NGOs who receive multiple sources of funding and provide a range of programs. NSW Health funded the proposal and MHCC contracted Quality Management Services to develop what has come to be known as the Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF).

The HSQF does not replace existing standards or remove the need to respond to funding body requirements but streamlines the process removing duplication. The project is due for completion in November 2003.

### **Mental Health Rights Manual Second Edition**

The Law and Justice Foundation funded MHCC to produce a second edition of the manual. Melinda Hayton is contracted to complete the rewrite. The rewrite is extensive and consultation with the MHCC Board and other government and non-government bodies has been part of the process. The manual is due for release in early 2004

### **NSW NGO Conference March 2004**

MHCC in partnership with Illawarra Area Health Service and the Centre for Mental Health is holding the second NSW NGO Conference in Wollongong. The conference is called 'Turning the Tide' and is focusing on NGO growth, partnerships and collaboration, resilience and priority areas for NGOs.

### **Dual Diagnosis Project**

This is a partnership project between MHCC and the Department of Community Services. The Dual Diagnosis Project (DDP) is informed by a promotion, prevention and early intervention approach to dual diagnosis with a focus on collaboration between services, education and resource development. It is designed to:

- provide guidelines for DoCs workers to identify and appropriately refer parents experiencing co-existing mental health and substance abuse problems;
- encourage collaboration between mental health and drug and alcohol service providers promoting an holistic family inclusive approach to care;
- encourage collaboration between mental health NGOs and NGO family support services in meeting the needs of children who have a parent with a dual diagnosis;
- improve the understanding of family members and out of home carers on the impacts of dual diagnosis on children in their care;
- ameliorate long term harm to children by providing family members and out of home carers with practical guidance and age appropriate resources on dual diagnosis to engage and educate the children in their care.

The project is due for completion in December 2004

### **NSW State Election Campaign**

MHCC developed a State Election Campaign in the lead up to the 22nd March 2003 State Election. The purpose of the campaign was to ensure that mental health issues are placed on the policy agendas of the major political parties and the Greens and the Democrats

The campaign involved:

- Campaign kits for member groups to lobby local members.
- Letter writing campaign
- NSW Disability Action Alliance (NDAA) Political Forum on 13 November 2002 at the Parliament Theatre, Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney.

Marginal Seat Forum; MHCC hosted a forum in the marginal seat of Manly as part of NDAA's campaign strategy to hold a forum in a number of marginal seats throughout the State

## **NSW LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL INQUIRY INTO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES 2002**

In December 2002 The Legislative Council Select Committee Inquiry into Mental Health Services in NSW tabled its final report. The report made 120 recommendations. A forum was held at Parliament house on 24/1/03 at which MHCC Chair Joy Said gave a keynote address. The aim of the forum was to discuss the report and steps towards implementation. Dr Brian Pezzutti, (Chair of Mental Health Inquiry) suggested that MHCC should coordinate the process.

### **Internet e-Forum**

MHCC established an Internet e-Forum ([www.mhcc.org.au](http://www.mhcc.org.au)) in March 2003 to provide a means through which the mental health sector could discuss the recommendations of the Mental Health Inquiry and give everyone a voice in the formation of better mental health services. MHCC encourages ongoing participation in the e-forum to help progress the recommendations of the Inquiry.

### **Day of Participation and Action**

To further the process and allow wider participation by MHCC member groups and others, MHCC held a 'Day of Participation and Action' on May 30th 2003. The day was hosted by MHCC and Dr Pezzutti and drew together approximately 200 stakeholders from across NSW, at the Balmain Leagues Club. It was designed to prioritise the recommendations of the Inquiry and begin the formation of networks and action plans that will enable the successful implementation of the most critical recommendations. Speakers included Joy Said, MHCC Chairperson, Dr Pezzutti, Garry Moore, Director of NCOSS and Larry Pierce (NADA's Executive Director – Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies).

### **Action Groups**

Action groups were set up at the 'Day of Participation & Action' seminar to establish a consultative process across key topic areas:

- Coordinated Approach
- Service provision treatment and care
- Carers
- Housing & Homelessness
- Multicultural
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders
- Substance Abuse
- Intellectual Disability
- Older People
- Young People
- Forensic

MHCC is currently facilitating these Action Groups, which are open to all to participate and help forward the Mental Health Inquiry recommendations. The groups will meet on a regular basis to share information and continue establishing action plans that identify the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in the implementation of specific recommendations.

MHCC also consulted with NCOSS and the Disability Council to discuss the Mental Health Inquiry findings and prioritise focus.

The government has committed to making a formal response to the Inquiry due towards the end of 2003.

## **MHCC SUBMISSIONS, CONSULTATIONS & PRESENTATIONS OF NOTE**

### **Black Dog Institute**

MHCC participated in consultations to identify how Black Dog can work within the broader mental health sector.

### **Carers NSW, Mental Health Reference Group.**

MHCC participated in this forum, which reviewed the content of the training package for Mental Health professionals on enhancing relationships with carers. .

### **Central Sydney Mental Health Consumer Consultants Training Course**

MHCC gave an educational presentation regarding the role of Mental Health NGOs and MHCC for the Central Sydney Mental Health Consumer Consultants Training Course.

### **Community Relations Commission's green paper 'Cultural Harmony, the next decade 2002 -2012'**

The Community Relations Commission sought feedback on its green paper which includes four new key objectives which will underpin the Community Relations Commission Plan of Action 2012. These objectives recognise the importance of leadership, community harmony, social justice obligations and economic and cultural opportunities in supporting and fostering our multicultural society. MHCC highlighted the NGO mental health service sector's sensitivity to the needs of culturally diverse consumers and carers.

### **Comprehensive Risk Assessment Guidelines**

MHCC reviewed these guidelines, which deal with suicide risk assessment and management. Comments included the following: the need for a greater emphasis on close observation and safety for people assessed as being at risk of suicide; the need to make it clearer that impulsive behaviour is a risk factor; the complexity of assessing depression and suicide risk in a patient in the General Hospital, where frequently used criteria for assessing depression, such as difficulty eating and sleeping and having a bleak outlook about the future, can be due to factors other than depression. MHCC provided information relating to other ways in which these patients could be assessed and supported. The importance of linking people with appropriate community supports prior to discharge was also emphasised.

### **Consultations with MHCC Member Groups on a range of topics from the following sub-committees:**

Employment, Accommodation, Strategic Issues, Consumer and Carer Consultative Group

### **Corrections Health Community Consultative Committee**

MHCC attended an inaugural meeting held to begin a process of community consultation. A range of organisations were invited to provide ongoing input into processes and projects within Corrections Health.

### **Department of Education and Training, Disabilities Community Consultative Committee.**

MHCC participated in consultations and feedback directed towards making education and training opportunities more accessible to students with a range of disabilities including disability from mental illness.

### **Department of Housing Disability Action Plan Consultation**

DOH sought feedback from MHCC and other stakeholders regarding latest Disability Action Plan. While the Department has a number of initiatives including the Joint Guarantee of Service (JGOS) with the Department of Health which is currently under review, it is evident this and other initiatives like it, are functioning in some regions to varying extents but not in others. Recommendations such as extending JGOS to all service providers, including NGO service providers, would benefit consumers.

### **Department of Housing Eligibility Policy Forum**

MHCC participated in this forum, which was convened so that representatives from the Dept of Housing could explain the eligibility policy, in particular the Living Skills Assessment process.

### **Development of the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Social and Emotional Well Being 2004-2009**

MHCC participated in consultations focussed on identifying priority areas in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and social and emotional well being, together with strategies aimed at facilitating improvement in priority areas. MHCC input included the importance of ongoing education and support for Aboriginal Mental Health Workers.

### **Disability Council of NSW Consultation for Peak Disability Groups.**

MHCC participated in consultations focussed on the consultation paper "Building a simpler system to help jobless families and individuals". MHCC emphasised the importance of providing opportunities and support for people with disabilities to participate in employment and the resulting benefits for the person.

### **Eating Disorders Service Plan Submission**

MHCC reviewed the draft document. Comments included the need to ensure that the plan was developed in collaboration with non-government organisations (NGOs) and included clients of NGOs. The importance of ensuring that staff of NGOs had access to training and support was also stressed.

### **Educational Services for People who will be Working with, and/or Training, People with a Disability due to Mental Illness.**

MHCC consulted on ways in which the capacity of the above people could be enhanced.

### **Estate Management Service Standards of the Office of the Protective Commissioner (OPC)**

MHCC reviewed the standards and welcomed the introduction of fact sheets, which explain the role, processes and power of the OPC for new clients. The introduction of the use of electronic file notes as an initiative to assist in keeping records accessible and up to date was commended as was the initiative requiring staff to notify people of significant decisions in writing. It was noted that Standards 4.10 and 4.11 were missing from the list of proposed standards. These standards ensure that clients are receiving relevant benefits and that a deceased client's estate is managed appropriately. MHCC stressed the importance of these standards and the need for their inclusion.

### **Flexible Service Delivery, Law Reform Commission, Attorney General's Department.**

MHCC participated in consultation directed towards assisting the Law Reform Commission to make their services and resources more useful, appropriate and accessible for people with a wide range of disabilities, including disability from mental illness.

### **Forum by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board.**

MHCC participated in this forum, which was held to mark the 10th anniversary of the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act and to launch a publication, which outlined the achievements of the last 10 years. Employment of people with a disability has declined in the last 10 years and it is thought that this is partly due to the recent emphasis on multi-skilling in the workforce. Employers are now identifying a wider range of skills than previously as essential criteria in job advertisements. This has unfortunate effects for people with disabilities. For example, when a current drivers license is specified, this excludes people with epilepsy, visual impairment and people on certain medications, even though they could often perform the job well and even though it is not necessary for every employee in an organisation to drive. Information from the forum was included in MHCC's submission to the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into the Disability Discrimination Act.

### **Hospital Discharge Framework Committee.**

MHCC participated in consultations, which identified the problem of early discharge of patients from every area of the hospitals, including mental health, without provision for adequate community resources. Critical factors in discharge planning were identified, monitored and evaluated. Questionnaires to assist the discharge planning process have been developed and will be evaluated.

### **Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) Flexible Service Delivery Team Project disability community consultation.**

The Industrial Relations Commission is another organisation which falls under the Attorney General's Department and the Team has been created to implement improvements to their services for people with mental health problems and disorders and people with disabilities. MHCC recommended a broadening of information provided by the IRC so that people with mental health problems and disorders can access information on the services provided by the IRC. That is, regarding unfair dismissal and discrimination in the workplace.

### **Institute of Psychiatry Consumer Advocates Training Course.**

MHCC presented at the Consumer Advocates training course on Mental Health Policy, Service Structure, Legislation and Complaints Mechanisms.

### **Investment and Financial Services Association (AFSA) draft disability income insurance policy application forms**

The Mental Health Council of Australia was asked by IFSA to seek comment on the draft disability income insurance forms following concerns raised regarding discrimination of mental health consumers by insurance companies. MHCC sought feedback via the Consumer and Carer Sub-Committee. Members of the sub-committee raised a number of concerns and questions regarding the draft application forms. Some examples of the concerns raised included; the language used in the forms being very dated and likely to cause offence to consumers, and the lack of statistical data provided to assess risk. The general consensus of the sub-committee was for the forms to be totally redesigned. These comments, along with further more detailed feedback, were forwarded to the Mental Health Council of Australia.

### **Legislative Council Child Protection Inquiry**

MHCC presented a written submission and was requested to present evidence at the hearing. Mary Jelan from Charmian Clift Cottages presented on MHCC's behalf.

### **MHCC Annual pre-budget submission to NSW Government**

Issues covered included: the need for effective accountability for spending at AHS level; Increase of 25% to MH budget to fund aftercare in the community; 10% increase in MH budgets for health promotion activity; increase access to counselling including non-crisis counselling; development of specialist residential treatment services for people with complex needs, including substance abuse dual diagnosis; workforce development strategy ensuring both mental health services and D&A services have the capacity to work with people with a mental illness and substance use problem.

\* MHCC also had strong input into the mental health component of pre-budget submissions developed by People with Disabilities (PWD) and NCOSS.

### **Moving Forward CD-Rom**

The Hunter Institute for Mental Health sought feedback from MHCC regarding a range of issues including supported accommodation and homelessness for the Moving Forward CD-ROM targeted to a broad spectrum of health professionals, encompassing. It is designed as a reference tool.

### **National Mental Health Plan 2003-2008 - MHCC Response to the draft**

In addition to emphasising the need for accountability for implementation of the plan, the submission focused on the need to clearly articulate all the elements that contribute to 'recovery' and develop strategies and services in line with this understanding. Workforce issues to include NGO staff development. Research priorities to include exploring the effectiveness of NGO community support services.

### **NDAA Disability Action Alliance Forum.**

MHCC participated in this forum which was well attended by a wide range of disability groups. Politicians present were Carmel Tebbutt, Brad Hazzard, Arthur Chesterfield-Evans and Ian Cohen. Each politician covered a range of relevant issues in their speeches, including areas relevant for mental health. A broad range of questions were asked by attendees. MHCC asked questions related to provision of services for people with mental illness.

### **Newcastle University Presentation**

MHCC gave a presentation on the findings and recommendations of the Mental Health Inquiry to Newcastle University Social Sciences

### **NSW Industry Group on People Ageing with Disability, Cross-Sector Position Paper: People with Disability who are Ageing**

MHCC participated in a consultation focussed on the Cross-Sector Position Paper and emphasised that consumers suffering a disability due to mental illness have a very different experience of ageing than others and consequently have different issues and needs. Recommendations included improved case management of clients; a disability needs assessment team and a workable model to effectively assess dual diagnosis. Also suggested was independent living skills training, increased community resources, as well as cross-sector staff training. MHCC also proposed ongoing involvement in the further development of the recommendations.

### **NSW Nurses Association Mental Health Seminar**

MHCC presented to the NSW Nurses' Association Mental Health seminar. The presentation focussed on the NSW Mental Health Inquiry and recommendations, including those relating to Nursing. The process of progressing the implementation of the recommendations was presented. The role of MHCC in coordinating this process was explained and participants were encouraged to become involved.

### **Postvention Guidelines surrounding a suicide death for NSW Health staff and staff in private hospitals and facilities**

MHCC reviewed the guidelines. Comments included the difficulties surrounding the use of the term "postvention" which is not widely used or understood. The need to explain what was meant by the phrase "provide support" was stressed. It was recommended that staff receive education about the guidelines and the need for further education of most staff in relation to suicide prevention, particularly in the area of assessment.

### **Presentation Skills Course**

MHCC participated in consultations relating to the development of the Institute of Psychiatry, Presentation Skills Course for Consumer Advocates.

### **Privacy NSW Stakeholder Consultation: Draft Guidelines under the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIP Act) on Consent and Capacity**

MHCC participated in the Privacy NSW Stakeholder Consultation. Whilst the right of people with a mental illness to privacy and confidentiality was acknowledged the important issue of avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy in order that confidentiality requirements did not inappropriately exclude the carer. The formation of a single simple system that provides user-friendly guidelines was promoted. A flexible service delivery approach was recommended that will provide a general guide to treatment and room for individual assessment with the client participating in the decision-making process. MHCC also supported a system that encourages cross sector collaboration.

## **Productivity Commission's Inquiry into the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)**

MHCC contributed to the inquiry by providing a written submission and was requested to present at the hearing. Janet Meagher from the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (PRA) represented MHCC along with MHCC Secretariat representation. Comments included the importance of decreasing discrimination against people with disabilities and promoting their rights of acceptance by society and participation in society. It was recommended that the DDA be retained with amendments to broaden and strengthen the complaints process. It was also recommended that standards be further developed, monitored and enforced.

## **Provision of input by MHCC to Blind Citizens Australia**

Consultation on communicating with people with a mental illness.

## **Recruitment, Retention and Education of Mental Health Nurses.**

MHCC participated in consultations to develop strategies to improve the recruitment, retention and education of mental health nurses.

## **The Role of Mental Health NGOs**

MHCC gave an educational presentation regarding the role of Mental Health NGOs and MHCC for the Central Sydney Mental Health Consumer Consultants Training Course.

## **TheMHS Conference August 2002**

MHCC presented the MHCC Homelessness and Mental Health position paper

## **Work and Family Policy in Cross-National Perspective Roundtable at Sydney University**

MHCC attended the roundtable hosted by Associate Professor Deborah Brennan with the purpose to discuss family policy including the debate for paid maternity and carers leave. There were a number of speakers addressing issues such as 'Debating Work and Care: public policies and employment arrangements in Australia and USA' and 'The Extended Hours Test Case: implications for the work/family nexus'. The issues surrounding carers for people with a mental health problem or disorder were raised in relation to the impact this can have on a carers career/job prospects, prosperity and their individual health and wellbeing.

## **You and Your Health Service**

NSW Health brochure designed to inform people of what to expect when admitted to hospital. MHCC reviewed this brochure in consultation with NCOSS.

## **OTHER SECTOR REPRESENTATION OF NOTE**

### **Blue Mountains Mental Health Support Services Planning Day**

Promotion of mental health issues within the broad community services operating within the Mountains area. A coalition of individuals and organizations come together regularly under the auspices of the Mountains Resource Centre and a group called Raising Awareness in Mental Illness (RAMI). This process is relevant to the work of the MHCC NGO Development Officers.

### **Lecture and Forum by Earl Shorris, founder of the Clemente Educational Program for Homeless People**

This program is an innovative and successful program for homeless and poor people that uses Socratic dialogue to educate participants in the humanities. Other supports such as crises intervention, short term counselling and referrals for medical care are also provided. The program is currently offered at more than 30 sites in America, Canada and Mexico. It is hoped that Clemente programs may be able to be provided in Australia.

### **NSW Association for Adolescent Health (NAAH)**

MHCC met with NAAH to discuss their submission to the NSW Legislative Council's Inquiry into Mental Health.

### **Safeguards Committee**

MHCC attended this meeting which was addressed by Ethel McAlpine Deputy DG DADHC. Ms McAlpine gave an explanation of the new operational structure within DADHC.

### **Schizophrenia Fellowship Seminar**

MHCC attended this seminar which addressed issues of confidentiality and the rights of consumers and carers. There was also panel discussion raising the issues and identifying some of the work being done by the Attorney Generals Dept.

### **Schizophrenia Fellowship Symposium 'Out of the Darkness into the Light'**

Information on new approaches to mental illness and schizophrenia in particular including the cognitive basis of delusions, early intervention research and Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation were discussed at this seminar attended by MHCC.

### **Vicserv Conference in Melbourne**

MHCC attended this conference to gain a better understanding of the NGO sector in Victoria and to assess any opportunities to build links with Vicserv and other NGO peaks in other states.

### **Viewing of "Hometown," Film**

This film tells the story of a group of homeless men and their experiences at Charles O'Neill House, Surry Hills, which runs an innovative and successful program offering the tools to break the debilitating homeless cycle.

### **Vocational Directions in Mental Health**

The Third Vocational Mental Health Services Workshop directed at services assisting people with a mental health disorder gain employment workshop was attended by MHCC.

## **MHCC FORUMS & SEMINAR SERIES 2002 – 2003**

### **Mental Illness & Families Seminar**

Attendees included staff from DoCS, Cabinet Office, CCCs, a range of specialist and non-specialist NGOs. The theme was around mental illness and families which covered a presentation by the NSW Health Mental Illness Prevention Initiative Parenting and Mental Health Framework; The Gaining Ground and Family Support Officer program in SWSAHS and some of the Mental Health Promotion initiatives being developed by the Mental Health Association

### **MHCC 2002 AGM Day and 20th Anniversary**

The day was very successful with the attendance of Dr Brian Pezzutti speaking about findings of the Mental Health Inquiry; Douglas Holmes presented on consumer involvement; Jenna Bateman provided opportunity for members to feed into the NSW State election campaign. Joy Said and Trevor Elligett introduced the 20th anniversary celebrations and NSW Minister for Health, Craig Knowles, announced recurrent funding of \$400,000 for MHCC NGO Sector Development positions and cut the MHCC 20th anniversary cake.

### **OH&S Training Seminar for specialist mental health NGOs**

MHCC co-ordinated Occupational Health and Safety training with a mental health service focus for member groups covering broad mental health issues such as CALD, policy, crises intervention, families, privacy etc.

### **Consultation around Provision of Supported Accommodation**

MHCC convened a forum at the request of Professor Beverley Raphael of non-government organisations to allow the Centre for Mental Health to inform the sector and seek feedback on the \$5 million allocated to the Supported Accommodation Project (HASI) for high needs mental health clients.

### **The Future Directions Networking Forum for CCCs in NSW**

The forum provided an opportunity for members of CCCs across NSW to get together and discuss issues, concerns and experiences related to CCC membership. Participants also completed a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats); discussed resources; and identified further issues that need to be addressed.

### **Pre-election Forum in the marginal seat of Manly**

MHCC hosted forum held at Harbord Diggers Club and attended by approximately 70 people. The forum was addressed by the candidates: David Barr, Independent and Sitting Member; Hugh Zochling, Labor candidate; Jean Hay, Liberal candidate; and Keelah Lam, Greens candidate. The Democrats did not have a candidate but were represented by Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans. Speakers presented their policies on disability and responded to questions from the audience. As there was strong interest in Mental Health issues, Dr Brian Pezzutti, who was attending the forum, was invited to speak about the findings and recommendations of the Mental Health Inquiry.

## **MHCC QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER, 'VIEW FROM THE PEAK'**

### **Articles included:**

#### **Spring/Summer 2002**

'Revolutionary Change Recommended By Mental Health Inquiry', 'DSP Reform Has Been 'Negated'', 'Consultation Around The National Mental Health Strategy', 'Personal Support Programme (PSP): Issues And Interventions', 'The Better Service Delivery Program', 'NSW Disability Action Alliance Forum', 'MHCC Presentation To Child Protection Hearing'.

#### **Autumn 2003**

NSW State Election 2003, "'Where To From Here?' - Mental Health Inquiry E-Forum', 'Disability Services Forum', 'Court Liaison and the Role of NGOs', 'NSW Parenting Program for Mental Health', 'Mind Matters Magazine'.

#### **Winter 2003**

'A Successful Day of Participation and Action', 'Moving the recommendations forward', 'Innovative approach to income generation', 'Lifeline research further highlights the gap in mental health services', 'Mental Health stakeholders and Life Insurers come together to address discrimination', 'NGO spending lags behind in NSW', 'Review of Privacy Guidelines underway'.

## **MHCC MEMBER SURVEY 2003**

Thank you to the MHCC members who found the time to fill in our 2003 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! So here's a summary of what our members had to say about MHCC services (a complete tally of results can be found on the MHCC website [www.mhcc.org.au](http://www.mhcc.org.au) or call MHCC on (02)9555 8388 to obtain a hard copy).

### **The benefits of MHCC membership**

The majority of our respondents rated the information provided to them by MHCC as of most benefit to them. 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 also rated well the systemic advocacy and representation of member organisations at government level provided by MHCC.

### **Keeping you informed**

Members were interested in being informed on a wide range of topics with funding opportunities, conference information as well as state and national policy updates being most important. Other issues mentioned included; supported accommodation, sexual violence, rural issues, dual diagnosis, innovations and new services, and the latest research into mental health.

### **MHCC Forum May 2003**

According to survey results, MHCC's Day of Participation & Action received a very positive response despite acoustic problems with running the small consultation groups. Respondents generally found the speakers and quality of information to be valuable as well as the event providing an excellent networking opportunity.

### **MHCC Seminar Series**

Regarding topics of interest for our future seminars, some of the ideas included: Building partnerships with business and government; Funding opportunities and submissions; Working with the media; Current research; Duty of care; Projecting your voice; Insurance; Staff supervision.

Information on future MHCC seminars and conferences will be provided to you in our FYI Faxes, View from the Peak and in the 'What's On' section of our website ([www.mhcc.org.au](http://www.mhcc.org.au))

## Action Groups

When asked to prioritise the key areas identified in the Mental Health Inquiry, respondents' views were varied, however the top five were; Coordinated approach, Service provision treatment and care, Housing and homelessness, Substance abuse and Carers.

## Internet

Most respondents indicated they were accessing the MHCC website with some regularity and ease of gaining information on a range of issues as well as connecting to the e-forum. Requests for other information included: referral information and continuity of care, links to current treatment and updates on policy reform. While participation on the e-forum varied from good to sporadic, MHCC is working to simplify access to encourage more frequent input.

## MHCC MEMBERS 2002 - 2003

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

Moomba Accommodation Services  
 Mountains Community Resource Network  
 Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of  
 NSW (MDAA)  
 National Association for Loss & Grief (NSW) Inc  
 Neami Limited  
 Neami Illawarra  
 Neami South East Sydney  
 New Horizons Enterprises  
 Newtown Neighbourhood Centre - Boarding  
 House Project  
 Northern Beaches Mental Health Support Group  
 Northern Rivers Fellowship  
 Northern Sydney Health Area Mental Health  
 Northern Sydney MH Area Consumer Network  
 NSW Consumer Advisory Group  
 NSW Rape Crisis Centre  
 NSW Users & AIDS Association  
 Open Employment  
 Parramatta Mission  
 Peer Support Foundation Limited  
 Personnel Employment Albury Wodonga Inc  
 Physical Disability Council of NSW

Progressive Employment Personnel  
 Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association  
 Richmond Fellowship of NSW  
 Richmond Fellowship of NSW (Hunter)  
 Schizophrenia Fellowship  
 SOMA  
 Southern Community Welfare Inc  
 Stepping Out Housing Program  
 Suicide Prevention Australia  
 Sydney Counselling Centre  
 The Marian Centre  
 The Salvation Army  
 The Station Ltd  
 Transcultural Mental Health Centre  
 Triple Care Farm - Mission Australia  
 Tweed River Valley Fellowship Inc.  
 UnitingCare Nareen Gardens  
 Western Riverina Community Care  
 Westworks Inc  
 Wollondilly Camden Family Support Service Inc  
 Women & Mental Health  
 Woodville Community Services Inc

## NEW MEMBERS 2002 - 2003

CCC Armidale  
 CCC Inner City  
 CCC Liverpool/Fairfield  
 CCC Kempsey Now CCC Macleay  
 CCC Mental Health Consumer Advocacy – Taree  
 CCC Mid North Coast Partnership Committees  
 CCC Mid Western Area Health Service  
 CCC Tamworth  
 CCC Tenterfield  
 CCC Tweed Valley  
 City Women's Hostel  
 Compeer Illawarra  
 FairGO Health Forum  
 Hope Unlimited Group  
 Kathleen York House

Mental Health Issues Group – St Vincent de Paul  
 Mental Health Reconnect  
 Mid Western CAG Inc  
 Mind Matters Media Inc  
 Neami Limited  
 Neami Limited Illawarra  
 Neami Limited South East Sydney  
 NSW Rape Crisis Centre  
 Parramatta Mission  
 Physical Disability Council of NSW  
 Southern Community Welfare Inc  
 The Salvation Army  
 Transcultural Mental Health Centre  
 Western Riverina Community Care  
 Woodville Community Services Inc