



National Mental Health Consumer & Carer Forum

2018-19 Achievements

The National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF) is a combined national voice for mental health consumers and carers. Members listen, learn, influence and advocate in matters of mental health reform. The NMHCCF was established in 2002 by the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council and reports to the Mental Health Principal Committee. Funding is provided by the Australian Government and state and territory governments. It is currently auspiced by Mental Health Australia.

Membership of the NMHCCF is comprised of one consumer representative and one carer representative from each Australian state and territory and representatives from the following consumer and carer organisations and population groups:

- blueVoices
- Carers Australia
- Consumers Health Forum of Australia
- Grow Australia
- Mental Health Carers Australia
- Private Mental Health Consumer Carer Network Australia
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) representatives

The NMHCCF provides advocacy on mental health consumer and carer issues through representation on a large number of national bodies, such as government committees and advisory groups, professional bodies and other consultative forums and events. NMHCCF members also research and prepare submissions, raise awareness and share information relevant to consumers and carers at the national level. Members use their lived experience, understanding of the mental health system and communication skills to advocate and promote the issues and concerns of consumers and carers and ensure these are addressed as part of the national policy development and planning processes in Australia.

Meetings

The NMHCCF met three times face to face in 2018-19; 25-26 October 2018, 26-27 March 2019 and 13-14 June 2019. Reports from the October 2018 and March 2019 meetings are available at: <https://nmhccf.org.au/content/reports-meetings>. The June 2019 meeting focused on working group activities and no meeting report was required.

Submissions

The NMHCCF contributed to the following national consultations, reports, issues and policies:

- Senate Community Affairs References Committee Public Hearing – accessibility and quality of mental health services in rural and remote Australia – 19 July 2018
- Submission in response to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee inquiry to the My Health Record
- Submission in response to the Productivity Commission inquiry into mental health
- Online feedback to the draft National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Information Priorities 3rd edition
- Four teleconference consultations with the Productivity Commission regarding the inquiry into mental health
- Teleconference consultation regarding the Implementation review of the Pharmacy Trials Program

Copies of public submissions are available on the NMHCCF website, www.nmhccf.org.au

Representation on national committees, working groups and at conferences

In 2018-19 NMHCCF representatives continued to provide consumer and carer perspectives at national mental health committees and events. In addition to involvement on existing committees and working groups, a total of 9 consumer and 8 carer representatives from the NMHCCF have been selected for the following new opportunities this financial year:

- Australian Government Department of Health
 - Millions Minds advisory panel
 - Working group to oversee and guide the implementation of Action 9 of the Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan
- National Mental Health Commission
 - Peer workforce roundtable
 - Working group to guide the development and delivery of the consumer and carer guide (Action 21.3 of the Fifth Plan)
 - National Mental Health Research Strategy Steering Committee
- NSW Mental Health Coordinating Council – Working group to improve access and use of the reimagine.today website
- The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care - Roundtable to advise on the review of the sentinel event Suspected Suicide of a Patient in an Acute Psychiatric Unit/Ward
- Brisbane North Primary Health Network (PHN) - Roundtable of PHN cooperative national mental health stakeholders
- Safety and Quality Partnerships Standing Committee - Safety and Improvement Forum 2020 conference organising committee

In February 2019, the Mental Health Principal Committee (MHPC) increased its membership to include a consumer and a carer representative – the Co-Chairs of the NMHCCF. The NMHCCF Co-Chairs attended the 27 March and 28 June 2019 MHPC meetings.

NMHCCF representatives also participated in the following forums, events and conferences:

- 2nd Annual NDIS Conference and Mental Health Conference (panel member)
- Australian Rural and Remote Mental Health Symposium (keynote speaker)
- The Mental Health Services (TheMHS) Conference (conference attendees)
- Consumers Health Forum - Ministerial roundtable
- 2019 Annual Issues and Opportunities Workshop hosted by Mental Health Australia
- Everymind steering group for carers online program development
- Productivity Commission Mental Health Policy Network member teleconference (hosted by Mental Health Australia)
- PHN Cooperative National collaboration on PHN mental health commissioning teleconference
- Australian Digital Health Agency mental health forum
- Mental Health Australia events:
 - Grace Groom Oration
 - Members policy forum
 - Parliamentary Advocacy Day

Sector engagement

In 2018-19 NMHCCF members strengthened relationships and engaged with peak mental health consumer and carer organisations, MOU partners and other key stakeholders through the following activities:

- Regular teleconferences with MOU partner, Mental Health Australia
- Regular teleconferences with the National Mental Health Commission
- Guest editorial for Mental Health Australia CEO update (March 2019)
- Teleconferences with CEOs of key national disability and mental health organisations to discuss future partnership opportunities
- Met with Australian Mental Health Leaders Fellowship participants to discuss consumer and carer representation, leadership and engagement
- Signed the 'Life in Mind Australia' National Communications Charter
- Provided copies of relevant publications for distribution at mental health conferences and events.

NMHCCF Work plan activities

In 2018-19, members participated in the following NMHCCF working groups to progress work plan activities:

- Marketing and Communications Working Group
- Forum Member Engagement Working Group
- Operating Guidelines Working Group
- Consumer and Carer Inclusion Working Group

Key working group achievements in 2018-19 included:

- Finalising the 2018-2021 NMHCCF Marketing and Communications Strategy
- Forum member engagement survey

The working groups progressed activities aligned with the following six goals:

1. Enhance, promote and progress genuine national partnerships and inclusion of mental health consumers and carers at all levels of government and community
2. Improve access to, and sharing of, NMHCCF information between national, state and territory networks and organisations
3. Increase capacity of mental health consumers and carers to advocate and participate in legislation and policy development, implementation, delivery and evaluation at all levels
4. Provide an informed strong and unified voice on consumer and carer issues to government, the mental health sector, and other identified stakeholders
5. Identify and promote good and ethical mental health initiatives, ensure the adherence of human rights principles and legislation. Insist on meaningful inclusion and recognition of consumers and carers in all aspects of a contributing life framework
6. Build a knowledge base of mental health services and programs, national and jurisdictional plans, Acts and strategies to underpin and inform the work of the NMHCCF

Governance

The NMHCCF Executive during 2018-19:

Consumer Co-Chair	Lorraine Powell (WA Consumer representative)
Carer Co-Chair	Emma Donaldson (blueVoices Carer representative) until March 2019 Eileen McDonald (NSW Carer representative) from April 2019
Deputy Consumer Co-Chair	Lyn English (SA Consumer representative)
Deputy Carer Co-Chair	Elida Meadows (TAS Carer representative) until June 2019
Ordinary Consumer member	Heather Nowak (CHF Consumer representative)
Ordinary Carer member	Katrina Clarke (VIC Carer representative)



2018-19 Membership

State/Territory / Organisation	Representative
Australian Capital Territory	Matthew Martin (Consumer) Janet Milford (Carer) until January 2019 Rosslyn Williams (Carer) from April 2019
New South Wales	Daya Henkel (Consumer) from March 2019 Eileen McDonald (Carer)
Northern Territory	Elizabeth Brown (Consumer) Aaron Morris (Carer)
Queensland	Tanya Kretschmann (Consumer) Sarah Roxburgh (Carer) until April 2019
South Australia	Lyn English (Consumer)
Tasmania	Jan West (Consumer) Elida Meadows (Carer) until June 2019
Victoria	Keir Saltmarsh (Consumer) Katrina Clarke (Carer)
Western Australia	Lorraine Powell (Consumer)
blueVoices	Emma Donaldson (Carer) until March 2019 Shannon Calvert (Consumer) from March 2019
Carers Australia	Peter Heggie (Carer)
Consumers Health Forum of Australia	Heather Nowak (Consumer)
Mental Health Carers Australia	Kristine Havron (Carer) until November 2018 Kerry Hawkins (Carer) from January 2019
Private Mental Health Consumer Carer Network Australia	Patrick Hardwick (Carer) until April 2019 Judy Bentley (Carer) proxy from April 2019 Norm Wotherspoon (Consumer)
Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) representatives	Naseema Mustapha (Consumer) from February 2019 Iren Hunyadi (Carer) from February 2019