



Annual Update from the NMHCCF: 1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020

The National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF) is a combined national voice for mental health consumers and carers. We listen, learn, influence and advocate in matters of mental health reform.

NMHCCF members represent mental health consumers and carers on a large number of national bodies, including government committees and advisory groups, professional bodies and other consultative forums and events.

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.

During 2019/20, the NMHCCF members continued to represent mental health consumers and carers on many national bodies, such as government committees and advisory groups, professional bodies, and other consultative forums and events. Members also used their lived experience, understanding of the mental health system, and communication skills to advocate and promote the issues and concerns of consumers and carers through providing submissions on key mental health issues.

Submissions

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

- Submission in response to the Draft Report from the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health
- Submission to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety
- Response to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements Issues Paper: Health arrangements in natural disasters
- Response to the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care's consultation on the Draft National Safety and Quality Digital Mental Health Standards
- 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

NMHCCF representatives continue to provide consumer and carer perspectives at national mental health committees and events. In addition to involvement on existing committees and working groups, consumer and carer representatives from the NMHCCF have been selected for the following new opportunities:

- **Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan (Fifth Plan)**
 - Action iv –Project Steering Group with oversight of the Renewal of the National Mental Health Policy (Australian Government Dept of Health)
 - Action 9 Working Group to oversee the development, implementation and monitoring of National Guidelines to improve coordination of treatment and

- supports for people with severe and complex mental illness (Australian Government Dept of Health)
- Action 21.3 Working Group to guide the development and delivery of the Consumer and Carer Participation Guide (National Mental Health Commission)
- Action 21.4 Working Group to develop a process for revising the National Standards for Mental Health Services (Office of the Chief Psychiatrist, South Australian Dept of Health)
- Action 21.1 Working Group to review the 2005 National Safety Priorities in Mental Health (Office of the Chief Psychiatrist, Queensland)
- **Australian Government Department of Health**
 - Million Minds Advisory Panel
 - Primary Health Reform Consultation Group
 - National Mental Health Workforce Strategy advisory group
- **National Mental Health Commission**
 - Peer Workforce Roundtable
 - National Mental Health Research Strategy Steering Committee
- **NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission** (NDIS Commission) Disability Sector Consultative Committee.

In addition to these new opportunities, NMHCCF members participated in several national and local committees and activities including:

- Fifth Plan Mental Health Expert Reference Panel (MHERP)
- Fifth Plan Reducing Stigma and Discrimination Working Group
- Safety and Quality Partnerships Standing Committee (SQPSC)
- SQPSC's Safety and Improvement Forum SAIF 2020 conference organising committee
- Mental Health Information Strategy Standing Committee (MHISSC)
- Australian Digital Health Agency's working group for the development of digital health tool kits
- Various Commonwealth Government advisory groups such as the Million Minds Panel
- PHN groups such as the Northern Sydney PHN Community Committee and the Brisbane North PHN Collaborative
- The RACGP's General Practice Mental Health Standards Collaboration.

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

- Australian Rural and Remote Mental Health Symposium (the NMHCCF were Gold Sponsors of this event, four NMHCCF members attended)
- The Mental Health Services (TheMHS) Conference (the NMHCCF distributed brochures at this conference, three NMHCCF members attended)
- Compassion Revolution Conference (two NMHCCF members were invited and attended)
- National PHN Mental Health Lived Experience Engagement Network (MHLEEN) bi-annual planning meeting – attendance and presentation
- Peer Workforce Development Guidelines Focus Group (National Mental Health Commission)
- Mental Health Australia events:
 - Grace Groom Memorial Oration
 - Members Policy Forum
 - Parliamentary Advocacy Day.

Sector engagement

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
- Teleconferences with CEOs of key national disability and mental health organisations to discuss future partnership opportunities
- Became a full member of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) and entered into an agreement with AFDO to support, engage and promote the Disability Royal Commission to people with disabilities and their families
- Provided copies of relevant publications for distribution at mental health conferences and events
- Participated in regular meetings with other national mental health peak organisations and the Australian Government Department of Health regarding the mental health response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Meetings

The NMHCCF usually meets face-to-face three times each year, and several times in between by teleconference and in its working groups. The NMHCCF met face-to-face for three days in December 2019 to progress actions within its Workplan.

Like so many groups, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the NMHCCF developed new ways of working together and in early 2020 the meeting schedule was altered. The NMHCCF held meetings via videoconference in March and May 2020. Reports from the 2019/20 meetings are available at: <https://nmhccf.org.au/content/reports-meetings>.

In addition, the NMHCCF met via videoconference to participate in training and development activities, webinars on specific topics, and to progress content for submissions.

NMHCCF Work plan activities

The NMHCCF established working groups to progress specific activities within its workplan. Currently there are three ongoing working groups and two short term working groups:

- Member Engagement and Operating Guidelines Working Group. Its purpose is to engage members in the work of the NMHCCF and to implement guidelines and processes to support member engagement and the functioning of the NMHCCF.
- Consumer and Carer Leadership Working Group. Its purpose is to consolidate and promote existing initiatives and resources to facilitate effective growth of lived experience voices and leadership.
- Marketing and Communications (Marcomms) Working Group is responsible for the implementation of the Marcomms Strategy (internal and external communications) including oversight of the website revision process.
- NMHCCF publications review which has oversight of the project to review and revise all current NMHCCF publications. This work will be concluded by November 2020. The NMHCCF publications are available at: <https://nmhccf.org.au/resources/publications>
- Combined Lived Experience Voice Working Group – has oversight of the project to co-design a national combined mental health lived experience voice. Further details on this project are outlined below.

Co-design of a national combined lived experience voice

In response to the Craze Review recommendations, in March 2019 the MHPC agreed to provide additional funding to the NMHCCF in 2019/20 to support the NMHCCF to undertake co-design activities.

The NMHCCF planned to host a workshop on 16 March 2020 to initiate a conversation on the development of a model for a combined national mental health consumer and carer voice using a co-design process. The NMHCCF had to postpone the workshop due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The NMHCCF revised the approach for this work given it was unlikely a face to face workshop would be held in the foreseeable future. The approach for this work involved a series of smaller two-hour workshop/meetings, held via videoconference. The workshops were held in state, territory and national groups. The participants at these workshops included the same 60 participants/organisations invited to the March 2020 workshop: the current NMHCCF membership, consumers and carers from diverse groups not represented on the NMHCCF, jurisdictional representatives nominated by MHPC members, Mental Health Australia, the National Mental Health Commission, Australian Government Department of Health, the National Disability Insurance Agency, and other relevant groups.

A report summarising the process of and key outcomes from the workshops was prepared by the consultant, has been considered by the NMHCCF, and a copy provided to all workshop participants. A copy of the co-design workshops report is attached to this report for the benefit of MHPC members.

Further consideration of the next steps in this work will be considered by the NMHCCF taking into account other activities within the sector such as the impending release of the Final Report from the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health.

NMHCCF Executive

The 2020-2022 NMHCCF Executive commenced in April 2020. The members of the Executive are:

Consumer Co-Chair	Keir Saltmarsh (VIC Consumer representative)
Carer Co-Chair	Hayley Solich (WA Carer representative)
Deputy Consumer Co-Chair	Tanya Kretschmann (QLD Consumer representative)
Deputy Carer Co-Chair	Kerry Hawkins (Mental Health Carers Australia Carer representative)
Ordinary Consumer Member	Lorraine Powell (WA Consumer representative)
Ordinary Carer member	Eileen McDonald (NSW Carer representative)

Activities to date in 2020/21

As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the NMHCCF has held meetings every six weeks, via videoconference, to progress its Workplan. Dr Ruth Vine, Deputy Chief Medical Officer Mental Health presented at the 26 August 2020 NMHCCF meeting.

The NMHCCF prepared four submissions to September 2020:

- Response to the RACGP's draft standards for prison health services
- Response to the Australian Government's consultation on Adult Mental Health Centres
- Submission to the independent review by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission into the death of Ms Ann-Marie Smith
- Submission to the 2020 Review of the Disability Standards for Education 2005

Copies of public submissions are available on the NMHCCF website:

www.nmhccf.org.au.

The NMHCCF has also commenced membership on the following committees:

- Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan Action 22 – development of a mental health supplement to the NSQHS Standards (second edition) which will align the NSQHS Standards and the National Standards for Mental Health Services
- Consumer and carer representatives on several working groups established to support the work of the National Mental Health Workforce Strategy advisory group.

Conclusion

The new way of working in the pandemic environment has been highly effective for the NMHCCF in progressing its work plan. The working groups are able to meet more regularly, NMHCCF members have joined videoconferences to formulate input to various submissions, and the full NMHCCF membership meets every six weeks to work on strategic items.

The relationship with Mental Health Australia and the NMHCCF is positive and the NMHCCF is focussed on achieving our mission and vision.

September 2020