



## National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF) Report

<b>Name of Delegate:</b>
<b>State / Territory:</b>
<b>Date of meeting: 18,19,20 April 2007</b>
<b>Venue: Melbourne Airport Hilton and Holiday Inn Melbourne Airp</b>
<b>Consumer / Carer Representative (please circle)</b>
<b>Key Issues Discussed:</b>  <b>Strategic Planning</b> The meeting was an extended format which included Orientation and some systems advocacy training for members in role of committee members and assertive communication. The training was run to enhance effective participation by members in the NMHCCF and their constituencies. The training was well received with most sessions rated useful to very useful by all eight participants, while two sessions were felt not to be useful by four participants. Participants also indicated the need for further training and it is anticipated that opportunities for training will continue.  <b>1. Strategic planning for the Forum</b> around the following priorities*: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhance relationships with MHCA and other key national bodies to streamline its functioning;</li><li>• Enhance the profile of the Forum and build its own capacity to strengthen the national consumer and carer voice; and</li><li>• Raise the political awareness of the priorities and concerns of mental health consumers and carers prior to the 2007 Federal election.</li></ul> *(The Forum agreed on the importance of also keeping on their agenda the issue of increasing the accountability of mental health systems throughout Australia to consumers and carers).  <b>2. Strategic planning for working groups</b> on the identified priority areas of seclusion and restraint, welfare to work and privacy and confidentiality. Further work in these areas over the next year is likely to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Privacy and confidentiality: comprehensive identification of consumer and carer issues around privacy and confidentiality nationally with the aim of informing national initiatives and increasing awareness and participation in the development of policy around privacy and confidentiality by consumers and carers at the national and state level.</li><li>• Seclusion and restraint: identification of national consumer and carer policy</li></ul>

on seclusion and restraint and feeding this into the work of the AHMAC MHSC Safety and Quality Partnership Group National Action Plan on Safety and Quality in the area of seclusion and restraint.

- Welfare to work: identification of consumer and carer views on an appropriate approach to the welfare to work policy to contribute to the Senate Community Affairs inquiry into mental health services in Australia in the first instance, as well as Centrelink to inform ongoing policy implementation.

The strategic planning documentation is currently being drafted and will be considered by the NMHCCF at their next teleconference.

The next teleconference of the NMHCCF will take place on Wednesday 27 June 2007.

#### **AHMAC National Mental Health Standing Committee National Mental Health Policy Revision Steering Committee**

The NMHCCF has a representative on this time limited (expected to be concluded by August 2007) committee which is reviewing the National Mental Health Policy to reflect changes including COAG funding.

The NMHCCF is keen to see any revisions made available for sector wide comment and will pursue this with the committee.

#### **NMHCCF representation on External Committees:**

The NMHCCF considered its processes around representation on external committees. It noted the number of times consumers and carers are being asked to participate in national policy development without remuneration. There was agreement to take this issue up with the committees and government departments concerned as well as with the Mental Health Standing Committee at their next meeting.

#### **The learning disabled and mental health care and treatment issues.**

The NMHCCF noted the prevalence of mental health issues amongst people with intellectual disabilities, the numbers of barriers they face in accessing mental health services and the lack of supports for clinicians in dealing with them. The NMHCCF endorsed Tony Fowke's proposal to raise this issue with MHSC and agreed to provide a letter of support.

#### **Key Decisions Made**

- As outlined above.
- One outcome of the strategic planning sessions was the undertaking by members to improve their communications through their state or territory liaison contact and with their constituents more broadly.

**Actions Required**

- A range of ongoing activities for NMHCCF members are outlined above and focus over the next few months will be on the development of the NMHCCF's strategic plan.
- Where appropriate, NMHCCF members will be contacting state or territory liaison contact to ensure that their role is clear and effective.