



NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMER & CARER FORUM

National Mental Health Consumer & Carer Forum

FORWARD PLAN 2009- 2011

Background:	<p>The National Mental Health Consumer & Carer Forum (NMHCCF) was established in 2002 by the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council.</p> <p>The NMHCCF is funded through contributions from each state and territory government and the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.</p> <p>The formation of the NMHCCF was in recognition of the importance of having mental health consumer and carer involvement in national policy development.</p> <p>The NMHCCF is currently auspiced by the Mental Health Council of Australia.</p>
Purpose:	<p>The NMHCCF purpose is to give mental health consumers and carers a united, national voice focused on creating a more responsive service system that will improve their quality of life.</p>

<p>Goals:</p>	<p>The NMHCCF will focus its efforts on the improving outcomes consistent with the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Policies, practices and services</u> that impact on the wellbeing of mental health consumers and carers will reflect and adhere to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognised standards of human rights, including in respect to consumer privacy and confidentiality - The principles of social justice and social inclusion. ▪ All levels of society will identify and address <u>discrimination and stigmatisation</u> faced by mental health consumers and carers. ▪ The <u>mental health workforce</u> throughout Australia will be trained in inclusive practices and in working with the whole family consistent with National Mental Health Standards. ▪ Mental health consumers and carers will be systematically <u>consulted</u> at all stages of the development and implementation of policies and services that impact on their lives.
<p>Roles:</p>	<p>The NMHCCF will undertake a number of roles and activities to deliver on the above goals.</p> <p>The majority of these roles are focused on systemic advocacy and reforms to mental health policies, practices and services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparing <u>documentation</u> such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Position papers - Submissions - Policy statements - Procedural documents such as terms of reference - Correspondence. ▪ <u>Advocacy and representation</u> on bodies such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government committees and advisory groups - Professional bodies - Other consultative forums.

<p>Roles: (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Lobbying</u> key decision makers, including in particular at different levels in the health and human services sectors. This includes elected representatives and officials in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Australian, state and territory governments - Professional bodies. ▪ Delivering or facilitating <u>sector development</u> activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consumer and carer training - Information exchanges - Peer support activities - Research. ▪ Conducting <u>consultations</u> with carers and consumers at all levels. ▪ Facilitating <u>networking opportunities</u>, collaborations and partnerships involving consumers and carers, as well as other individuals and groups with which the NMHCCF works.
<p>The people the NMHCCF work with and for:</p>	<p>To fulfil its purpose and meet its goals, the NMHCCF will work first and foremost to give a voice to, and represent the views of, mental health consumers and carers across Australia.</p> <p>To do this the NMHCCF will work with and for the organisations that it represents, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consumer and carer non-government organisations ▪ Peak consumer and carer bodies, including in the private sector ▪ State and territory governments. <p>Other key partners and stakeholders include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Australian, state and territory government agencies with a role to play in the health and wellbeing of consumers and carers ▪ Professional bodies and organisations involved in developing and delivering health and human services ▪ Health and community services organisations operating at a national, state, area or local level.

<p><i>The people the NMHCCF work with and for:</i> <i>(continued)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Government representatives and elected officials with a role to play in shaping legislation, regulations, policies and services ▪ Independent and government committees and advisory groups ▪ Philanthropic organisations, and bodies able to assist with financial support ▪ Academic and research establishments ▪ The media and the community at large.
<p><i>Values & Principles:</i></p>	<p>The NMHCCF has identified a number of key values and principles that make its perspective unique and significant with the Australian policy environment. The NMHCCF values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Utilising its members' personal, <u>lived experience</u> and shared, first-hand knowledge of the mental health service system in Australia. ▪ <u>Listening and learning</u> from members and developing a strong and <u>united perspective</u> representative of both mental health consumers' and carers' views. ▪ Being a <u>powerful, independent and national voice</u> for reform. ▪ Being <u>open and responsive</u> to consumers and carers, both as members represented on the NMHCCF and as an organisation as a whole. ▪ Being able to strategically <u>identify where change within the mental health service system is needed</u>, as well as what a practical and innovative response might entail.

<p>Work Practices:</p>	<p>Individuals and organisations involved with the NMHCCF operate with an agreed set of work practices that underpin the NMHCCF interactions and activities. This involves a commitment to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Respectful communication</u> regardless of who is involved or the issue it concerns. Staff and members' diversity of views and their capacity to discuss and debate in an inclusive manner make the NMHCCF voice stronger. ▪ <u>Ethical and accountable work practices</u>, including in declaring and managing any perceived or actual conflicts of interests. ▪ Being <u>outcome-orientated</u> and true to the NMHCCF purpose, goals, values and priorities. ▪ Being <u>timely and responsive</u> to communication involving the NMHCCF Secretariat, other NMHCCF members, or external parties.
<p>2009 Priorities:</p>	<p>In order to meet the above goals, in 2009 NMHCCF has set itself a number of priority areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To consolidate and <u>complete existing initiatives</u>, commitments and priorities specifically in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Privacy and Confidentiality - Welfare to Work - Seclusion and Restraint. <p><i>(See NMHCCF Strategic Plan April 2007-08 for details)</i></p> 2. To initiate <u>new focus areas and responses</u> related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Mental Health Plan Development - Workforce Development - Addressing Stigma. 3. To expand the NMHCCF <u>representational capacity</u>, including through involvement in the Mental Health Standing Committee.

<p>2009 Priorities: <i>(continued)</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. To promote <u>awareness</u> of the NMHCCF specifically amongst consumer and carer organisations across Australia. 5. To expand the NMHCCF <u>engagement</u> with partner organisations, including with Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse consumer and carer groups. 6. To promote the <u>sustainability</u> of the organisation through securing ongoing resources and support for the NMHCCF Secretariat, members, its roles and priorities.
<p>Next Steps in Putting the Plan into Action</p>	<p>In order to put the NMHCCF Forward Plan into action the NMHCCF has initiated a number of complementary planning processes, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of a detailed <u>NMHCCF Business Plan</u> that outlines and distils key priorities, actions and outputs for the next 18-24 months. 2. In preparation for this activity, members will be invited to nominate for an ad hoc <u>planning working group</u> focussed on forward and business planning. 3. Reviewing the current working groups' focus and membership for 2009 and beyond to identify more efficient and effective ways to gather NMHCCF input and use members' expertise. The review will also consider ways to more effectively manage the time demands made on the NMHCCF Secretariat and members. How the working groups might operate will need to follow the agreed NMHCCF Business Plan priorities and outputs. 4. Updating of the <u>NMHCCF website and brochures</u> in line with the above plan. These documents will describe the NMHCCF outputs and achievements over the last 12-18 months, together with upcoming priorities and areas for action. 5. Preparing a publicly accessible <u>Annual Report</u> that, in plain English, showcases the NMHCCF outputs and achievements to date.

<p>Next Steps in Putting the Plan into Action: <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>6. <u>Streamlining the current NMHCCF communication</u> and planning processes, including in respect to making more efficient use of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Secretariat and members emailing- Working group focus and activities- Telephone conferences- Face-to-face meetings.
<p>Further Information</p>	<p>NMHCCF Executive Officer National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum PO Box 174 Deakin West ACT 2600 Tel: 02 6285 3100 Email: nmhccf@mhca.org.au</p>

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