



NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMER & CARER FORUM

National Mental Health Consumer & Carer Forum

2009-10 WORK PLAN

MAJOR PROJECTS SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

In August 2008, the National Mental Health Consumer & Carer Forum (NMHCCF) initiated a forward planning process that involved a survey of stakeholders on the achievements and future priorities for the NMHCCF. It also involved two half day workshops with NMHCCF members that resulted in a high level Forward Plan 2009- 2011.

In order to complete the planning process, the NMHCCF established a Planning Working Group, comprising 11 NMHCCF members.

In early 2009, the Planning Working Group initiated two complementary planning processes:

- 1) The development of a **2009-10 Work Plan**.

This Plan was to identify major projects, key strategies and actions until end of 2010 based on existing NMHCCF resources.

- 2) The development of a future **Business Plan** regarding how the NMHCCF might best position itself in the future.

This Plan was to identify future funding options, the sustainability of the organisation including the costs/ benefits of incorporation, and options for improved communication and marketing of the NMHCCF.

In February 2009, the Planning Working Group met for a two day workshop in Sydney to develop the Work Plan and major projects for 2009-10.

The workshop was facilitated by Edwina Deakin of EJD Consulting and Associates who also prepared the following summary of outcomes.

MAJOR PROJECTS

The Planning Working Group identified that in addition to the NMHCCF Secretariat and NMHCCF Executive overseeing regular teleconferences and face-to-face meetings of NMHCCF members, the NMHCCF would undertake four major projects in 2009-10.

What follows is a summary of these Projects and their proposed completion dates. More detailed information is outlined in a separate Work Plan matrix, which is a working document for NMHCCF members.

- 1) Undertake a **National Audit on the Effectiveness of Consumer and Carer Participation** in the planning and delivery of mental health policies and services across Australia.

A key marker of a quality mental health system is the genuine participation of consumers and carers in all aspects of the mental health system which serves them.

In 2004, the NMHCCF published its *Consumer and Carer Participation Policy – A Framework for the Mental Health Sector*¹. This Policy defined participation and laid out several best practice principles:

We look forward to the day when the principles outlined in this document have become standard practice for the entire mental health sector.

Five years later, the NMHCCF now proposes an audit against these principles to determine Australia's progress towards genuine participation for consumers and carers in the mental health system.

The audit will include an assessment of each state and territory against the core principles identified in the Policy. The audit will identify the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches and publish a national report card. The methodology to be developed for the survey will allow this report card to be reproduced at regular intervals.

The NMHCCF will establish partnerships and joint sponsorships with a range of organisations to help oversee this project. An independent researcher or organisation will be commissioned to conduct the research and prepare the report.

One key product of the research will be the development of a report card on the status of each jurisdiction's consumer and carer participation processes that can be updated and publicised by the NMHCCF on an annual or bi-annual basis.

Planned Completion Date: March 2010

¹ *Consumer and Carer Participation Policy – A Framework for the Mental Health Sector*, National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum, Canberra, 2004

2) Prepare a set of **Advocacy Briefs** on key consumer and carer issues.

These mini-position papers will be prepared using the expertise of current NMHCCF members.

The briefs will be drafted using a simple template and provide the NMHCCF members and Secretariat with valuable background information and advocacy points to be used in various contexts, including for the preparation of submissions, for use in face-to-face advocacy and meeting processes, and in media releases.

When completed the briefs will also be posted on the NMHCCF website, and will be regularly reviewed and updated.

Between 10 and 12 initial briefs will be prepared as listed below:

- Introduction to NMHCCF
- Purpose and Use of Advocacy Briefs
- Key Mental Health Carer and Consumer Statistics
- Consumer and Carer Participation- Key Issues and Benefits
- Seclusion and Restraint
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Mental Illness and Intellectual Disability Issues
- Employment Issues
- Discrimination and Stigma
- Duty of Care- Duty to Care
- Housing and Homelessness
- Consumer and Carer Rights and Service Accountabilities.

Planned Completion Date: July 2009

3) Identifying Consumer and Carer Priorities in Mental Health - development of a **National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Accountability Framework**

The aim of this project is for consumers and carers to define accountability in mental health. Other agencies are currently working in this area and the NMHCCF has the opportunity now to ensure this work is informed by the consumer and carer perspective.

An improved approach to mental health accountability has been the goal of successive National Mental Health Plans without real progress being made. A new system of accountability is currently the concern of the Australian Government (under the 4th National Mental Health Plan), the National Mental Health Advisory Council and the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission (through the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare).

The aim of this project is for consumers and carers in mental health to set the parameters by which they wish to assess the performance of the system which serves them. Matters that interest consumers and carers may differ from clinicians and funders. It is vital that any new system of

national mental health accountability properly reflect the priorities of consumers and carers.

It is timely for consumers and carers to plainly state the basis upon which they want to see the mental health system held accountable. By what measures will consumers and carers and the broader community have confidence that people with a mental illness are receiving proper care?

Answering this question will involve consideration of accountability in the health system but also more broadly, as consumers and carers are vitally concerned with matters such as housing, employment, social participation, quality of life and so on.

A core focus of this project will be the identification of measures to ensure an effective approach to service feedback.

The outcomes of this project will be:

- a new national accountability framework endorsed by the NMHCCF
- a contribution to the current national debate about accountability and outcomes in mental health
- a new and clear capacity for consumers and carers to assess the suitability of accountability and outcome measures proposed by other agencies.

Planned Completion Date: end 2010

4) Prepare a Position Paper on the **Cost-Benefits and Opportunities for involving Consumers and Carers in the Mental Health Workforce.**

The paper will provide evidence on the cost-benefits and opportunities for involving consumers and carers in both paid and volunteer roles in the clinical and non-clinical mental health workforce.

The paper will also identify practical issues associated with implementing increased employment including by defining different types of roles (for eg. support, advocacy, education and training), plus discussing remuneration, training and recruitment, peer support, and other facets of an ethical workforce framework.

Planned Completion Date: September 2010

At regular intervals in the development, research and launch phases of each of the above major projects, the NMHCCF will plan and implement regular promotional and advocacy activities (detailed in Work Plan matrix).

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