



# NSW CAG INFO\_LINK

AN INITIATIVE OF NSW CONSUMER ADVISORY GROUP  
MENTAL HEALTH INC.

Issue No 1 Feb 2002

ABN 82 549 537 349

## CHAIRPERSONS REPORT

Best wishes for the New Year!

We have been extremely busy since the last edition of the newsletter and inside you can read about all the things that have been happening.

Firstly, on behalf of NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health inc. (NSW CAG) I would like to congratulate Mr. Douglas Holmes who is the new Executive Officer for NSW CAG. Doug has been with us since December last year and is a very welcome addition to the NSW CAG team. We all look forward to working with you in the future. Welcome aboard!

In November last year NSW CAG held the ‘Forging Our Future’ Conference. A big thank you to all who came, and everyone who helped to bring this conference together. The feedback from this conference has been extremely positive and we look forward to holding another conference in the future.

We also would like to warmly welcome 3 new members to NSW CAG who bring with them extensive skills and experience in a variety of areas. Mark McMahon, Elizabeth Pemberton and

Anna Saminsky all joined NSW CAG in December 2001 and are already working hard. Keep up the good work.

Speaking of new members, NSW CAG is currently looking for new members to join the board. Any interested consumers or carers are encouraged to apply, and more information is included inside. Applications close in April 2002.

In December, we also said farewell to Patricia Boydell, who has finished her term with NSW CAG. Pat has made a valuable contribution to NSW CAG for consumers and carers, as well as advocating and lobbying extensively in her own local area. We thank you for your commitment and hard work Pat, and look forward to your contribution as an associate member.

NSW CAG has also been working on a strategic plan for the organisation and looking at better ways to progress issues, participation and building a stronger voice for consumer and carers at a state and national level. We would appreciate your feedback and I would ask you to complete and return the survey inside.

I hope you enjoy this edition of INFO\_LINK and I look

forward to a bright (and busy) future for NSW CAG.

Jodie Brown

## On the National Front.

During 2001 NOAC, the National Organisation of Australian CAGs ended, and will now exist as an unfunded alliance until December 2002. NOAC provides consumer and carer representatives to the National Mental Health Working Group (AHMAC) and the Mental Health Council of Australia. This allowed state CAG's to have direct input into decisions made at the commonwealth level. As a result, state CAG's will no longer be guaranteed an independent voice at a national level.

IN PLACE OF NOAC, the National Consumer and Carer Forum will be established and be linked to the Mental Health Council of Australia. We will inform you of further developments as they occur.

## What is NSW CAG?

The New South Wales Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health inc (NSW CAG) is an incorporated body that provides an ongoing mechanism for consumer and carer input to mental health policy and service

development implementation and evaluation..

NSW CAG incorporated on 29 July 1994 under the Associations Incorporation Act 1984 Registered No Y2007847

### **Who are NSW CAG members?**

NSW CAG has 15 representatives who reflect the focus of the second National Mental Health Plan. Membership consists of people who have used public or private mental health services, people with personal experience of mental health problems or carers who can be friends or family members of a person with a mental illness.

Members are selected using criteria outlined in the national guidelines for Consumer Advisory Groups and the current needs of the group.

NSW CAG will be advertising for new members during March/April 2002. Call the office for an information pack.

The Centre for Mental Health funds NSW CAG to:

- Consolidate the unique role of the NSW CAG as a peak Consumer and Carer advisory organisation in NSW

- Create and encourage intersectoral links between consumers/carers across the state to reflect the community, through Network NSW
- Develop cost effective projects that maximise Consumer and Carer participation in NSW
- Provide a Consumer and Carer centre providing information and networking opportunities

### **Ongoing updates of NSW CAG activities**

- Develop a database of Consumer and Carer contacts in NSW
- Creation of information resources to enhance Consumer and Carer knowledge and empowerment.
- Broaden membership base.
- Develop Code of Ethics and vision and mission statements for NSW CAG.
- Re vitalise NSW CAG Newsletter to disseminate information to stakeholders about mental health initiatives, practices and policies.
- Increase liaison with other consumer and carer organisations, Area Health Services and other groups to assist in the enhancement of the quality of participation.
- Listing of all Government Departments and how they impact on people living with a mental illness and their carers

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## **Thoughts from the Executive Officer**

Leaving Greater Murray as the Consumer Advocacy Coordinator has caused some regrets. Spending over two years in Albury working on the CANDO Project I had the privilege to work with many committed mental health staff, consumers, carers and also senior management all working together to bring change to a very large and complex system we called Greater Murray. This new position is interesting, challenging and still allows me to be involved with the future direction of consumer and carer participation across NSW.

Attending the “Forging our Future” Conference in November was also another rewarding experience, especially seeing the large contingent from country areas. The networking and goodwill that is happening through the consumer and carer movement is certainly showing the results of people contributing to a process that allows people to be involved. Some people call this “**EMPOWERMENT**”

The things that I would like to achieve during the next 12 months include working with NSW CAG members to further develop;

- 1 – 3 year Strategic Plan for NSW CAG with yearly operational plans
- Hire 2 New Staff (Information Officer and Youth Project worker)

- Co-ordinate the following Projects
  - Network NSW
  - Youth Project
  - Standards Festival
  - Write up Report from “Forging Our Future”



Where do they get the time to attend so many meetings?

During the last 12 months, NSW CAG has had Consumers and Carers in NSW involve in the following Committees, working groups and/or conferences:

- Better Medication Management System
- Care for Carers Program
- Consumer and Community Participation Implementation Committee Working Group
- Health Care Complaints Commission
- NSW Health Care in the community Reinvestment Strategy
- Joint Guarantee of Service
- Mental Health Implementation Group
- Master plan for the Rozelle Hospital Site Stakeholders Workshop
- Mental Health – Outcomes Assessment Training
- Mental Health Implementation Group
- National Organisations of Australian Consumer Advisory Groups
- NSW Council on Quality in Health Care
- National Practice Standards for Mental Health Workforce
- NSW Health and Equity Statement
- NSW Health Care in the Community Reinvestment Strategy
- NSW Health Privacy and Electronic health
- NSW Mental Health Review Systems
- NSW National Suicide Prevention Strategy Advisory Group meeting
- NSW Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention Steering Committee
- Office of the Protective Commission
- Officials Visitors Program
- Self Help Group project
- Violence Taskforce

**Working Groups**

- 2002 Annual General Meeting
- Annual Health Ministers Cricket Match
- Consumer to Citizen
- Editorial Sub committee

- Employment Working Sub committee
- Emergency Department Training
- Education and Training
- Executive Committee
- Mental Health Coordinating Council
- NSW CAG internal policy and procedure review committee
- Quilt Project
- Standards Festival Committee

**Conferences**

- Sunday 8 April Consumer and Carer Forum Suicide Prevention Australia Conference
- 9/10<sup>th</sup> November “Forging our Future”
- **Regular meetings with the Center for Mental Health**

A update on the progress of each of these committee will be included in the Annual Report due in December 2002

***Forging Our Future***

The Forging Our Future Conference attracted over 200 delegates who to attended a two day conference held at the Mercure Hotel on Friday 9 and Saturday 10 November.

Thirty papers were presented during the conference. A full conference edition of the news sheet will be forthcoming after the new Information Officer is appointed to NSW CAG in March.

Prof Raphael officially launched the Standards quilt.

More detailed information about the Standards quilt will be available in the Conference edition of the NSW CAG Info\_Link



This image is the centerpiece from the standards quilt.

NSW CAG is forming a committee to coordinate another Standards Festival. The festival will build on the work from the original Standards Festival held during

Mental Health Week in 2000. Those interested in being involved please call the Executive Officer on 9556 9219 for more information.

### ***Partners in Health***

The long waited Partners in Health report titled *Report of the Consumer and Community Participation Implementation Group* was released in Nov 2001.

This report outlines the way forward for NSW Health.

Under the plan, the Government increased funding for the health system with a two billion cash injection; guaranteed three-year recurrent budgets; and distributed health dollars more fairly across NSW. A full copy of the report is available from Better Health Centre – Publications Warehouse, Locked Mailbag 5003, GLADESVILLE, NSW, 2111 or phone (02) 9816 0452

### ***Health Ministers Challenge***

The Health Ministers Challenge cricket match is happening again for the fifth year.

The Consumers team had a sizeable winning margin at the end of the day last year..

For more information about involvement in either playing or helping to organize call Jim Scotman on 9607 3680.

The format is currently being reviewed to allow more people to be involved playing on the day.

### **Deadlines for Future Issues**

If there are items you would like included in future issues of the NSW CAG Info\_Link News sheet the following deadlines will apply.

Issue No 2. April 30th

Issue No 3 July 31<sup>st</sup>

Issue No 4 October 31st

### **USEFUL CONTACTS ETC**

#### **Association for Mental Health**

The Mental Health Association NSW Inc is a non-government organisation funded by Northern Sydney Area Health. Members are people who are interested in mental health issues. The Board of management is elected annually from the membership. The Association's major activities include provision of the Mental Health Information Service, support groups (including training and establishment of new groups), mental health promotion and advocacy.

1 800 674 200 or (02) 9816 1611  
<http://www.mentalhealth.asn.au/>

#### **Mental Health Council of Australia**

The Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA) is the independent, non-government sector peak body established under the National Mental Health Strategy to represent and promote the interests of the mental health sector and advise on mental health in Australia.

PO Box 174  
DEAKIN WEST ACT 2600  
Ph: (02) 6285 3100  
Fax: (02) 6285 2166  
E-mail: [admin@mhca.com.au](mailto:admin@mhca.com.au)  
<http://www.mhca.com.au/>

#### **Health Care Complaints Commission**

Worth ringing if nobody is listening  
1 800 043 159

## ***What is the NETWORK NSW Project?***

Since the release of the National Mental Health Plan (NMHP) in 1992 there has been a major shift towards identifying mental health clients as “consumers” and family members as “carers” of mental health services and, stakeholders in mental health who should have a role in influencing and directing mental health policy and service provision. From this direction the NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health inc. (NSW CAG) has evolved.

While consultation with the wider community is an important component in service planning and delivery the NSW Department of Health recognises that different groups of consumers have specific needs. The need of consumers and carers to access Mental Health services across NSW is being addressed through the NSW CAG Project “**NETWORK NSW**”.

NSW CAG started planning NETWORK NSW in July 1998. The project endorses the underlying principles of the NMHP. It aims to provide a coordinated approach between mental health consumers, carers, and NSW HEALTH in service reform, development, implementation and evaluation to ensure that mental health services focus on consumer and carer needs. NETWORK NSW will work with local mental health services to link consumer initiatives throughout the state and generate service planning in consultation with consumers and carers.

### **What would NETWORK NSW DO?**

The proposed role of Network NSW is to support the development of Consumer and Carer participation in NSW to:

- provide networking support and information to mental health consumers and carers who live in NSW.
- achieve long-term promotion and co-ordination of Mental Health consumer and carer initiatives within NSW.

### **The proposed objectives of the project are to:**

- develop a plan for prevention, promotion and early intervention developed in partnership with consumer and carers
- increase consumer and carers contributions to evidence-based programs in Mental Health
- develop a whole of life approach which address the needs of specific consumer and carer groups especially young consumers
- focus on outcomes and recovery
- broaden the base of participants in consumer and carer programs (including volunteers as well as involving members of the broader community outside the mental health field).
- facilitate group empowerment and other initiatives.

**Through NSW CAG NETWORK NSW** would offer a range of services for Mental Health Consumers and carers, including:

- A regular newsletter
- Phone contact and support
- Linkages into both the State and National consumer and carer consultation process
- A resource library
- A web page (under development and planned) for release in October 2002)

NSW CAG welcomes your written comments and thoughts about NETWORK NSW. We believe with the support and goodwill we have in NSW that NETWORK NSW will become a reality in the near future



# Network NSW Registration or Update Form

NSW Mental Health Consumers, Carers and others with an interest in mental health across NSW can apply to participate in Network NSW a NSW CAG communication strategy for developing consumer and carer involvement in mental health service policy and service provision.

*By completing this form you will be placed on a listing of people interested in either actively participating in or receiving information on the development of consumer and carer participation across NSW*

### Please tick type of Registration required:

Consumer       Carer       Group       Other

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Postal address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Group REGISTRATION** Name of Group \_\_\_\_\_

### Postal address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Group contact person: \_\_\_\_\_ - Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_

Any Comments: Use back of sheet if necessary

- Network NSW has three types of registration. There is no cost or charge involved with either registration

#### Full

- **Consumer:** Either current, past or eligible users of mental health services in NSW.
- **Carers:** family members or close friends who accept primary responsibility for the non-professional care of a person with mental illness.

#### Group

- **Groups** Any groups that have mental health consumers or carers as members or Associates

#### Other

- Organisations or individuals may join as other members. This will entitle people to attend **NETWORK NSW** meetings to and obtain information and attend activities.

#### Send information back to

**NETWORK NSW Project**  
NSW CAG  
PO Box 1108

ROZELLE NSW 2039

Phone: (02) 9556 9219  
Fax: (02) 9555 1041  
[eo.nswcag@tpg.com.au](mailto:eo.nswcag@tpg.com.au)